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Inter-Arab Affairs

Gulf Cooperation Council Summit Continues

Second Working Session Held

JN1912161889 Muscat Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Their majesties and highnesses, the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states, have held their second working session within the 10th GCC Supreme Council summit under His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, chairman of the current summit. This session began at 1730 today at the al-Bustan Palace Hotel, where their majesties and highnesses are residing.

During the session, the leaders will listen to a report by His Highness Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs, on the topics that the ministerial conference has discussed over the past 2 days. Foremost among these topics is the current state of affairs between Iraq and Iran and the progress of the negotiations between them. Also being discussed are the Lebanese cause and the efforts under way to resolve problems there, as well as other Arab and international issues.

In a statement before the session to the OMANI NEWS AGENCY, GCC Secretary General 'Abdallah Ya'qub Bisharah said that the leaders meeting today will hold an objective discussion of political issues. These issues will be tackled with the logic and wisdom that the international community understands.

Bisharah praised the responsible manner in which the GCC deals with these issues.

Second Session Concludes

JN1912195889 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1748 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Muscat, 19 Dec (WAKH)—Their majesties and highnesses, leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, concluded a while ago their second working session at al-Bustan Palace Hotel this evening.

Yusuf Bin-al-'Alawi 'Abdallah, Omani minister of state for foreign affairs, told reporters afterward that during the second session the leaders heard a report presented by the ministerial council on four major political issues. These were: the situation between Iraq and Iran and the latest developments in the negotiations in the United Nations concerning the Iraqi-Iranian dispute, a report on the Lebanese crisis, the stand in Palestine, and the political attempts to settle the Middle East cause.

He added that the leaders discussed these issues and submitted their recommendations to the foreign ministers to coordinate Gulf policies in a new style designed to help resolve all these issues.

He pointed out that during the session, a cable on Lebanese developments sent by President Ilyas al-Hirawi to the 10th summit conference was read. He explained that the 10th summit affirms the resolutions of the last Arab summit in Casablanca. He said the summit also affirms the decision concerning Lebanon made by the leaders in Casablanca—a decision that prompted the formation of the Higher Arab Tripartite Committee on Lebanon—and Arab efforts in bringing about the al-Ta'if document, which was approved by the Lebanese deputies to return legitimacy to the official institutions of Lebanon.

Regarding negotiations between Iraq and Iran, the council affirmed the need to establish peace between the two countries. Within the framework of the Palestinian intifadah, the council affirmed its support for the intifadah and adopted the Arab and Palestinian policies in this field.

For his part, GCC Secretary General 'Abdallah Ya'qub Bisharah told the OMANI NEWS AGENCY that their majesties and highnesses, leaders of the GCC states, took appropriate decisions during their second working session, lasting about 2 hours, concerning the development of negotiations between Iraq and Iran within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 598.

He said that the leaders discussed the new developments in the Arab arena, including the Lebanon and Palestine questions, as well as the subject of the blessed intifadah in the occupied Arab territories.

He stated that the resolutions adopted befit the philosophy, policy, and stands of the GCC states.

Yemeni Leaders Cable Summit

JN1812192389 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Dec 89

["Text" of joint cable sent by 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Yemen Arab Republic, and 'Ali Salim al-Bid, secretary general of the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, to the Gulf Cooperation Council's heads of state meeting in Muscat]

[Text] Your Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, Your Majesties and Highnesses, dear brother leaders of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC]: May God's peace and blessings be upon you.

As you convene your 10th summit against the backdrop of extremely important international changes, we take pleasure in expressing to you our pride in the achievements of the GCC in the interest of the well-being of the citizens of the GCC states and in promoting our common effort to attain maximum cooperation and complementarity across our Arab homeland.

We take this opportunity to praise the constructive role of the GCC in advancing the fortunes of its member countries and note the fact that the council added a new brick to the edifice of overall Arab unity in the interest of safeguarding the security and safety of the Arabian Peninsula and the Arabian Gulf region.

As your brethren in the two halves of the Yemeni homeland march determinedly toward peaceful and democratic reunification, we take pleasure in asserting that the realization of this Yemeni and pan-Arab objective, via our joint effort, will contribute to the attainment of further security and stability for our region and progress, and affluence for the people of the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the whole Arabian Gulf region.

We assert that Yemeni reunification will add to our dignity and impregnability through our combined efforts at these crucial times of political and social flux on the global scene. We also would like to declare that we are eager to cooperate with you to consolidate the foundations of constructive cooperation and fruitful complementarity on the road to a fuller Arab complementarity until total Arab unity is achieved.

Please accept our warmest congratulations and greetings as you open your 10th summit. We wish you every success in your endeavor to realize the good of your people and the advancement of your countries. May God's peace be upon you.

[Signed] Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, 'Ali Salim al-Bid

Al-Hirawi Sends Fahd Message

JN1912200389 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1808 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Muscat, 19 Dec (WAKH)—King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia, custodian of the two holy mosques, has received a message from Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi.

The message was delivered to the custodian of the two holy mosques by Lebanese Finance Minister 'Ali Khalil when King Fahd received him this evening at his place of residence at al-Bustan Palace in Muscat.

The reception was attended by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal.

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Executive Committee Issues Statement

Reaffirms Position on Dialogue

JN1912184089 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1720 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] At the end of 2 days of meetings in Tunis, the PLO Executive Commitee issued a statement reaffirming its readiness to initiate a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue in accordance with the bases outlined by the PLO Central Council in its recent meeting in Baghdad. The statement affirmed the PLO's absolute right to form the Palestinian delegation to this dialogue, which should be a preparatory step for the convocation of an international conference under the auspices and participation of the UN Security Council permanent members.

It is to be noted that the PLO recently accepted U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's plan to start an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue that will lead to elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The PLO Executive Committee's statement praised the Euro-Arab dialogue conference to be held in Paris 2 days from now. The committee voiced hope that this conference will bring about joint Arab-European action to expedite the peace process in the Middle East.

'Text' of Committee's Statement

JN1912211489 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Dec 89

["Text" of statement by the PLO Executive Committee following 15-17 December meetings under Chairman Yasir 'Arafat in Tunis—read by announcer]

[Text] The PLO Executive Committee held meetings from 15 to 17 December 1989 and issued the following statement:

The PLO Executive Committee began its meetings by addressing greetings of pride and appreciation to the children, women, and men of our people on the 2d anniversary of our people's blessed intifadah for their huge sacrifices and great achievements. These people are led by a high militant spirit and resolve, and along with this, the blessed intifadah is entering its 3d year. Our people continue to adhere to the objectives of our national struggle and remain determined to achieve these objectives.

The Executive Committee adopted a number of resolutions and measures to bolster the intifadah and safeguard and promote its achievements, relying on our people's deep-rooted unanimity over the declaration of independence, the resolutions of the 19th session of the Palestine National Council [PNC], and the Palestinian peace plan. The Executive Committee stressed the need to maintain the popular nature of the intifadah and focus on the broad popular participation and on the genuine democratic nature of the intifadah. The Executive Committee also stressed the special importance of the intifadah's role in confronting suspect schemes to circumvent the objectives of our national struggle, the PNC resolutions, and our political programs.

Regarding the Palestinian leadership's political moves to implement the Palestinian peace initiative and to secure our people's right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of their national independent state through an international conference, the Executive Committee reaffirmed their readiness, announced at our recent PLO Central Council's meeting in Baghdad, to launch a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue in accordance with the principles defined by the Central Council. We declare that only the PLO has the absolute right to form and announce a Palestinian delegation. This dialogue should constitute a preparatory step for the convocation of an international conference under international supervision and with the participation of the UN Security Council permanent member, in addition to Egypt and Sweden, and should be in accordance with the national resolutions adopted by the Central Council, primarily the PLO's absolute right to represent the Palestinian people throughout all stages of the dialogue until a just and comprehensive solution is reached. The Executive Committee stressed that it is not interested in any steps contravening these principles and bases.

Regarding Palestinian-Arab relations, the Executive Committee's discussions centered on the promotion of these relations on the basis of the resolutions of the recent Arab summit conference in Casablanca. This has been asserted by the resolutions of the recent Arab foreign ministers' meeting at the Arab League's headquarters in Tunis. The Executive Committee stressed the need to begin immediately the implementation of these resolutions and activate the seven-member Arab committee and international efforts on the basis of the Arab peace plan. The Executive Committee also stressed the need to prepare for an effective international conference and convene the nine-member Palestine Committee emanating from the Nonaligned Movement summit to carry out the nonaligned summit resolutions that support the Palestinian people.

The PLO Executive Committee also made a number of decisions and took a number of measures to activate and promote the PLO's bilateral relations with all fraternal Arab countries. The Executive Committee stressed support for the efforts of the tripartite Arab committee to secure the independence of fraternal Lebanon; to secure the unity of its land, people, and institutions; to establish its legitimate authority and sovereignty over all Lebanese territory; and to resolve all of its problems.

The Executive Committee also reviewed the outcome of the Malta meeting, especially as it concerns the Middle East, as told to the committee by the friendly Soviet side. It stressed the importance of pursuing the process of world peace and detente.

The Executive Committee also underscored the special importance of the Arab-European dialogue, scheduled to take place in the French capital on 21 December, taking into consideration the importance of joint Arab-European moves on the basis of the common ground between the Madrid Declaration and the Casablanca resolutions, so that the peace process can be seriously pushed forward through the international conference.

The PLO Executive Committee firmly bases its position on the great achievements of our people's struggle and their blessed intifadah and on the realistic and responsible political program drawn up by the PNC. It highly appreciates the Arab adoption of this program, the international backing, and the world understanding of the PLO's peaceful initiative and efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement that guarantees peace and security for all, including the independent Palestinian state.

The resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly—resolutions which reflect a worldwide consensus in support of our people's struggle—have shown the extent of the Israeli rulers' isolation and the extent of world condemnation of their policy and crimes against our heroic people. The reality of their anti-peace plans and the continuation of their occupation and oppression against our people and land—thanks to the unlimited support provided by the U.S. Administration to Israel's rulers and their criminal policy against our children and women—is constantly becoming clearer. This hinders international efforts to secure protection for our people and for Palestinian human rights. This U.S. position hampers the peace process in the region.

The Executive Committee, therefore, renews its determination to continue its efforts to reach this peace with the same force it is using to confront the plans of liquidation and capitulation. The Executive Committee pledges to the masses of our Palestinian people inside and outside the occupied homeland that it will continue the fight and struggle until our people's goals of freedom and independence are achieved. Glory to our righteous martyrs, and freedom and praise to our captives and detainees in the prisons of the enemy. It is a revolution until victory.

PLO's Al-Surani Discusses Dialogue With U.S.

PM1912155689 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Dec 89 p 3

[Interview with PLO Executive Committee member Jamal al-Surani by Zaki Shihab; date, place not given]

[Excerpts] [Shihab] As one of the people best informed about developments in the Palestinian position on U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's plan and the Egyptian-Palestinian contacts, could you tell us the latest?

[Al-Surani] I want to emphasize at this point that there is a red line which nobody can cross. That red line is represented by the Palestine National Council's [PNC] latest historic resolutions, which were adopted by the Casablanca Arab summit conference, thus becoming Arab resolutions. The most important of these is that the PLO is the party which represents the Palestinian people and which has an absolute right to do so. The resolutions also underscore the rights to self-determination, repatriation, and a state with Jerusalem as its capital. They also reaffirm the call for an international conference attended by all parties. [passage omitted]

The PLO took an initiative but regrettably the United States did not give it the attention it deserves, except for opening a dialogue with the PLO which is still where it started. Strangely, even though the Shamir plan dealt with elections—but elections of whom and for what?—it was used only as a pretext. What is the outcome of this plan? Nothing: It has no point. We agreed to elections, provided they are part of an overall process and not just hanging in the air on their own, without any objective. Then Egypt put forward the 10 questions which later became known as the Egyptian 10 points. [passage omitted] Israel rejected them insofar as it refused to answer them. Then came the Baker points which, to our surprise, espoused the Israeli position in one way or another.

We have a position which we cannot abandon for any reason, regardless of how long our people suffer murder, expulsion, deportation, detention, torture, and terrorism unprecedented even in the days of the Nazis. We have the will to make more sacrifices until Israel's withdrawal is achieved. [passage omitted]

There is full coordination and an exchange of views with Egypt, with the aim of achieving the best possible results. The Swedish mediation resulted in what is now called the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue prior to an international conference which is still not ripe in the mind of the United States, which agrees to an international conference in principle, provided it is preceded by an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. We entered the whirlpool of the U.S. espousal of Israel's position, with the consequence that if we accepted the Baker plan we would in fact be accepting the PLO's cancellation and agreeing to the Palestinian question's becoming a refugee question which should be solved by the Arab states. Accepting the Baker plan meant accepting the Shamir plan, because Baker, having stated that he would not amend his plan, did in fact introduce two main amendments to it, one of them relating to giving Israel a right of veto on the composition of the Palestinian delegation. That means that Israel would form the Palestinian delegation and that Shamir would be negotiating with Shamir. [passage omitted]

[Shihab] What is the truth about Egypt's position on the Baker plan?

[Al-Surani] It is not true that Egypt has accepted Baker's plan. It is not true. Egypt has conveyed to the United States the PLO's reply—not Egypt's reply. Egypt never claimed to be a substitute for the PLO. President Mubarak has said so himself, emphasizing that it is the PLO's right to form the Palestinian delegation and to speak for Palestine. Unfortunately some sectors of the media want to cast doubt on Egypt's role in Arab affairs, following Egypt's return to its natural place in the Arab fold.

[Shihab] How much understanding is there between Egypt and the PLO on that plan?

[Al-Surani] One hundred percent. Egypt fully understands the PLO's position, otherwise it would not have continued to play its part, and the PLO-Egyptian coordination and exchange of views would not have continued. What happens between us and Egypt is no secret. Everyone is well aware of the contacts taking place and the proposals and initiatives made.

We believe that the aim of the abundance of initiatives is to give Israel a chance to destroy the intifadah, but I want to say that the intifadah, which they claimed was spontaneous and would only last a few days or weeks, has been raging for 2 years and will continue for years and years, and it will assume many additional dimensions—qualitative, horizontal, and vertical. We will find the right weapon for every circumstance and will be prepared for everything. Let no one think that the Palestinian people have no weapons left. There are many weapons, and we know that the struggle will be long, very long.

We challenge Israel, and we tell the United States that never in the past 40 years has the chance of achieving a peaceful settlement been greater than at present. Radical changes are taking place, and we are influencing them and are influenced by them. Look at what is happening in Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa. The United States should shoulder the responsibility which it has long shunned, before it is too late.

[Shihab] Do you not believe that there has been a retreat in the U.S. position in the dialogue with the PLO insofar as the U.S. Administration now conveys its views to the PLO not directly but through a third party?

[Al-Surani] We say that the United States opened a dialogue which we considered positive. Nevertheless, it is standing still and has espoused Israel's position, in the belief that Israel can destroy the intifadah. Since the United Staes did not move forward, we cannot say that it has retreated. [passage omitted]

[Shihab] What was the Palestinian reply to the Baker plan as conveyed by the Egyptian Government?

[Al-Surani] Basically, the reply was that the PLO should form the delegation, that the PLO should have one delegation and Israel another, and that the delegation should not be, as Baker has suggested, formed from various Palestinian forces. We said to him: What Palestinian forces do you mean? Do you mean the forces of Abu-al-Za'im and Abu-Musa? If these are the Palestinian forces you mean, then go ahead.

The United States agreed to a dialogue with the PLO because it represents the Palestinian people. Washington has been knocking on doors in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip every day via ministers, journalists, envoys, and professors who go there to write their reports. All their reports emphasize that the PLO is the Palestinian people's representative.

This is why the first thing we insisted on was that the Palestinian delegation must be formed by the PLO. The second was that the solution must have international supervision, and the third was that the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue must pave the way to an international conference to guarantee the Palestinian people's legitimate rights.

These were our three conditions that were conveyed. We will not, and cannot, abandon them, because that would mean abandoning our cause.

[Shihab] It has recently been claimed that the PLO came under some Arab pressure to accept the Baker plan. How true is that?

[Al-Surani] There are no political pressures on the PLO. [passage omitted]

Ghawshah Comments on U.S. Dialogue, Syrian Ties

JN1612155889 Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 14 Dec 89 p 18

[Interview with Dr Samir Ghawshah, secretary general of the Palestine Popular Struggle Front, by Rashid Khashshanah in Tunis; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Khashshanah] How did the Palestinian leadership delineate the objectives of its political moves vis-a-vis the proposed settlement plans?

[Ghawshah] There is no doubt that the Palestinian leadership seeks to achieve our people's objectives, including their rights to repatriation, to self-determination, and to establish an independent Palestinian state on Palestinian national soil. Hence, our leadership's stance vis-a-vis the proposed plans has always been determined by how close these plans come to the attainment of our people's objectives—the objectives of freedom and national independence declared by the valiant Palestinian intifadah 2 years ago.

Nowadays, there is a host of plans and solution formulas proposed. However, these plans and solution formulas do not seek the realization of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, foremost of which is their right to self-determination. As for the Palestinian leadership, it unequivocally and unmistakably announced the launching of a Palestinian initiative conducive to the attainment of a just solution in the region during the last session of the Palestine National Council [PNC]. However, several parties headed by the United States have continued to deny the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, foremost of which is their right to self-determination. These parties have continued to employ all forms of pressure to peddle other peace plans that run counter to the Palestinian people's rights and their free will. Consequently, the plans proposed—the so-called Shamir plan, the so-called 10-point plan, or Baker's points—bypass the Palestinian people's rights. Therefore, I believe that we are still a long way from a settlement or peace in the region. The entire world has realized that there can be no security, peace, or stability in the Middle East region if the Palestinian people's rights are overlooked. As for the Palestinian leadership, it has shown an immense flexibility and a great readiness to attain a just settlement. However, the U.S. and Israeli sides have continued to adopt intransigent and hostile stands toward our people's rights and their quest for freedom and national independence.

[Khashshanah] Do you believe that the political initiative launched by Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] in Geneva 1 year ago has managed to realize the expected objectives?

[Ghawshah] The Palestinian position was made extremely clear during the 19th PNC session, as the PNC demonstrated an enormous political flexibility during that session. A series of intensive political moves and contacts ensued. These moves and contacts undoubtedly had an enormous and extensive impact on the international community. These Palestinian initiatives and moves were being pursued within the context of an increasingly strengthened struggle represented by the continuation of the glorious Palestinian intifadah. We would like to say that the loophole here does not lie in the Palestinian position. No, the Palestinian position displayed an enormous dynamism, but it lacked a basic element. Here I am referring to the absence of an Arab endeavor to help Palestinian efforts. Had the Palestinian efforts been bolstered by an Arab endeavor, we would have managed to make major strides toward the implementation of the Palestinian initiative. Hence, we realize that we are still facing a host of difficulties and obstacles represented first and foremost by the U.S. position and Israeli intransigence. So, we need more efforts and time to help the Palestinian initiatives and moves assume larger proportions to eventually end up with the realization of freedom and national independence.

[Kashshanah] How do you assess the outcome of the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue? Are there some who believe the dialogue has failed to achieve any progress for the cause, and are there some who still expect positive results?

[Ghawshah] We have understood from the very first that the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue cannot proceed at the pace we want and cannot achieve its results as long the central fault lies in the U.S. position itself. As long as the United States denies the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, foremost of which is their right to self-determination, the outcome of this dialogue will necessarily be unsuccessful. This dialogue even has been transformed into a kind of conflict. In certain cases, it became very rigid and did not have a mechanism to become effective. Its level has not been regulated so that it is not limited to the U.S. ambassador in Tunis alone, but so that other higher-level U.S. officials can take part in it.

We fully understand that the outcome of this dialogue cannot be determined through these meetings alone. The outcome of this dialogue will be determined by the accumulation of a number of struggles which will be reflected on the ground and which will influence positively the climate of the dialogue.

With the escalation of the glorious Palestinian intifadah, we will be able to build up a militant Palestinian effort and weight to coincide with a sincere Arab effort, which will support the Palestinian endeavor. We believe the dialogue will go through long phases which will at times be formal without having any effective mechanisms to bring about practical and tangible results from the dialogue.

Although we are well aware of the difficulties facing us, we assert that we will continue in this dialogue no matter how intransigent the U.S. positions get. We will continue to be interested in maintaining that dialogue-conflict in an effort to change the U.S. stand on the one hand, and because it constitutes one of the other forms and methods which accompany the different forms of our political, diplomatic, and militant action which will, in the end, allow us to achieve our goals.

[Kashshanah] Do you expect the interaction between the Soviet and U.S. positions at the Malta summit to result in progress toward formulating a positive stance on the international level toward the Palestine question?

[Ghawshah] The summit between Gorbachev and Bush dealt with a number of regional conflicts and issues, including the Middle East issue and its core—the Palestine question. We believe the discussion of this issue reflects the reality about the achievements and gains made by the Palestine question over the past 2 years through the valiant Palestinian intifadah, political action, and the proclamation of the Palestinian state by our PNC. Therefore, we were certain that the Palestine question will be discussed.

However, it may be premature to precisely establish the results, especially since the United States and the Soviet Union have relatively common viewpoints on certain issues, and differ on others. Through our contacts and knowledge of the positions, we believe there are a number of outstanding differences. We hope there will be—and struggle to bring about—a change in the U.S. position; and, the Soviet position may have certain influences. However, we do not live on illusions or false expectations. We realize that our struggle is a long process and that it is difficult to have sudden shifts which may bring about a total or substantial change in the U.S. position. It is also difficult for the summit to result in positions that may constitute a thrusting force to achieve a just settlement for the Palestine question. [passage omitted]

[Khashshanah] Among the conditions to reactivate the Arab situation is to redress relations among the frontline states [duwal al-tawq], namely Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. In your opinion, how can this objective be achieved?

[Ghawshah] He who wants to confront Israeli ambitions and restore his occupied territories on the basis of common interests—if we do not say on the basis of the principles of Arabism—then he necessarily needs Palestinian-Syrian relations to be sound and correct. Therefore, it has become necessary to continue efforts to redress Palestinian-Syrian relations. It is our duty in the PLO, for the sake of Palestine and the Arabs, to continue to exert all efforts to restore normal Palestinian-Syrian relations. We appreciate every Arab or international effort in this direction. In our opinion, redressing Palestinian-Syrian relations constitutes a basic change that will impose itself on the situation in the region, and will contribute to escalating our confrontation of the Israeli occupation.

[Khashshanah] But isn't there an essential difference between the PLO and Syrian positions?

[Ghawshah] We are not talking about aspirations, but about a national and pan-Arab duty. Therefore, all efforts should continue to redress these relations. At the same time, we realize that our viewpoints cannot be identical on all issues, so we must not look for points of disagreement, but for points of agreement in an effort to develop and expand them. In spite of everything, our drive will continue to be in the joint interests of both sides to confront the same enemy that is occupying Palestinian and Syrian territories. This requires that we rise up to the level of the national and pan-Arab responsibility. Moreover, we believe that the Casablanca summit resolutions constitute the base in accordance with which we should act. These resolutions have also provided common grounds of agreement on the level of the political and militant movement. [passage omitted]

PLO's Milhim Assesses Intifadah on Anniversary

PM1212165589 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Dec 89 p 9

[Interview with PLO Executive Committee member Muhammad Milhim by Huda al-Husayni on 7 December; place not given]

[Excerpts] [Al-Husayni] How do you assess the intifadah over the past 2 years?

[Milhim] The intifadah enters its 3d year stronger and greater than before. Our people are more confident of victory in their struggle and of achieving their legitimate national objectives of repatriation, self-determination, and the right to an independent Palestinian state on their national soil under the leadership of the PLO, their sole legitimate representative. [passage omitted]

[Al-Husayni] It has been said that most of the collaborators killed came from Nabulus.

[Milhim] Actually, the number of collaborators killed in the 2 years of the intifadah does not exceed 130 or 140. That means that the ratio of collaborators in relation to the Palestinian population in the occupied territory (1.5 million) is less than in the case of any other people who have lived under occupation. The Palestinian leadership's decision was that the collaborators should be tackled in stages—that they should first be warned and given a chance to repent. The Israeli occupation authorities, however, are trying to recruit many in the hope of causing infighting in the Palestinian ranks. The PLO is watching and trying to limit action to cases based on a decision by the unified leadership inside and approval by the higher committee outside.

[Al-Husayni] We have noticed that the wave of collaborator killing has eased. Is that because Fatah is now opposed to the killing of agents?

[Milhim] No, Fatah is not against killing agents but favors adherence to the Palestinian leadership's instructions, which are that no agent should be liquidated before all means to persuade him to repent are exhausted and no agent should be liquidated unless his case becomes serious and poses a threat to the continuation of the intifadah. [passage omitted]

[Al-Husayni] Do you believe that the intifadah will bring about a sudden change in the position of (Israeli Prime Minister) Shamir on the political process?

[Milhim] I am not optimistic about Shamir or the chances of his changing because of the intifadah or anything else. Shamir stands against the whole world and against at least half of the Israeli people or half of the Israeli Government. I would like to say to Israeli and world public opinion: If a man like Shamir is allowed to defy UN resolutions and world public opinion, then let me remind everyone of the fate of Hitler and Nazism which defied world public opinion in the past.

The answer should come from Europe, the United States, the Arab world, and everyone else about a man who defies the world and threatens world peace. The answer should come not from us Palestinians but from the United Nations and the world. [passage omitted]

[Al-Husayni] The United States says that it has received a positive reply from Egypt regarding Secretary of State James Baker's initiative. We know that that was the Palestinian reply, and we also know that what was positive about the reply was that a decision was made regarding Palestinian representation. How was that matter tackled?

[Milhim] I have no information about the Egyptian reply. If the Egyptian reply was Egyptian and positive, I know nothing about it. If the Egyptian reply was in fact a Palestinian reply and positive, well, Brothers Abu-Iyad [Salah Khalaf], Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], and other officials previously had said that our reply to Baker was positive.

It is positive not in the sense of: Yes, period. We are positive in our political moves. We are not opposed to Baker saying or proposing what he likes, but every now and then we wish to remind Baker and others of the fixed Palestinian principles. We are not against a political move by the U.S. Secretary of State. We are for such a move, which we assume takes into consideration the fixed Palestinian principles included in the Central Council's statement in Baghdad. That is the positive reply.

We now take political initiative as a strategy and we deal with officials around the world, East and West, with complete openness and a sense of responsibility, while always adhering to our own initiative—an initiative which has dazzled the world and dazzled the White House before anywhere else.

[Al-Husayni] But to Washington, a positive reply is one which excludes the PLO as far as formation of the Palestinian delegation is concerned. Furthermore, nobody has mentioned the PLO. Is that not a new concession on your part?

[Milhim] They do not say that the PLO reply is positive. We and the Egyptians say it is positive. Nobody in the U.S. Administration has said that it is positive.

[Al-Husayni] Yesterday (Wednesday) they said the Egyptian reply was positive.

[Milhim] Who said that?

[Al-Husayni] The U.S. State Department spokesman.

[Milhim] As I have told you, I have no information about the details of the Egyptian reply. I know of the Egyptian reply; it was published in your newspaper, and everyone knows it. The Palestinian reply is positive in my view and in the view of the Palestinian leadership. It is very positive and it covers all the initiatives raised from Baker's five-point proposal, to President Mubarak's 10 points, to the Palestinian initiative. The Palestinian reply covers all these points clearly and without any ambiguity. The positive thing about the Palestinian reply is that it does not say yes and no. It says yes. It says clearly that these are our fixed principles. The positive thing about the Palestinian reply is its clarity. The Palestinian reply was handed to [U.S. Ambassador] Pelletreau in Tunis.

[Al-Husayni] The Americans said: We have received an unofficial document from the Egyptians. It has been reported that Egypt conveyed the Palestinian reply to them because they do not recognize the PLO.

[Milhim] They can recognize whomever they like, but the PLO insists on being the main party whether in relation to the delegation, the talks, or anything else. There is no change in the PLO's position.

[Al-Husayni] What concessions are you prepared to make in the interest of a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue?

[Milhim] The PLO has made all possible concessions for a just and peaceful settlement. The PLO has nothing more to offer. If anyone has any more requests for PLO concessions, then let him submit them and we will study them and see if they are acceptable to the Palestinian leadership. We have enough courage to say so openly.

[Al-Husayni] Are you still willing to make other concessions?

[Milhim] We are willing to listen to any and give a clear answer. With regard to concessions, we believe that the

Palestinian initiative went three-quarters of the way and we expected the other side to cover the remaining quarter. The ball is in their court. [passage omitted]

[Al-Husayni] After the Malta summit, do you believe the Soviet Union will play a more effective role regarding the Middle East or will it remain the same, on the margin?

[Milhim] All of us in the Palestinian leadership are confident that Moscow is working, in full coordination with the PLO, for the establishment of peace as soon as possible. There were many topics on the Malta agenda dealing with Europe and other issues, but the Middle East question was not neglected at that meeting. On the contrary, it was one of the main topics.

[Al-Husayni] What are the Soviets telling you about the intifadah? Do they favor its continuation or are they advising you to stop it?

[Milhim] The Soviets are always for continuation of Palestinian demands and support the Palestinian people's resistance against occupation by all available and legitimate means recognized under international laws and charters.

The Soviets have never asked us to stop our resistance against occupation because that would be contrary to the spirit of the laws and ideologies advocated by the Soviet Union. Why should we talk about the Soviets only? Resistance to occupation is a legitimate right for all peoples. It is a right in which the Soviets, the Europeans, the Americans, and the entire world believe.

[Al-Husayni] Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has warned the Palestinians against resorting to arms in the intifadah because that would mean its end. Do you interpret that to mean that Rabin fears for the intifadah and does not want it to end?

[Milhim] He wants to make the threat that, if the intifadah is turned at any stage into a military action, it will meet failure and disaster. If the Palestinian leadership decides that any method of struggle and resistance is required at any state to achieve the objective, then it will not take advice from Rabin or anyone else. We do not want Rabin's advice. We know our way and we will proceed down the road toward achieving a Palestinian state and Jerusalem, God willing.

[Al-Husayni] These days you are celebrating the the 2d anniversary of the intifadah. Is the PLO leadership confident that the 3d anniversary of the intifadah will be celebrated?

[Milhim] I hope that we will celebrate the 3d anniversary of the intifadah as it achieves its objectives next year in Jerusalem and on Palestinian soil. If they are not achieved, the intifadah will continue. [passage omitted]

Egypt

PRC President Shangkun Arrives in Cairo 18 Dec

NC1812130089 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1250 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—Chinese President Yang Shangkun arrived in Cairo this afternoon at the beginning of a 4-day official visit to Egypt. President Husni Mubarak was at the head of the welcoming committee at the airport.

Meets With Mubarak

NC1812161789 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1430 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak said that the Arab homeland must have a strategy to deal with all situations, whether in Europe or elsewhere. He added that the Arab world must have a particular view on the issues it will face in the near future.

President Mubarak made these remarks today following the official ceremonies to welcome PRC President Yang Shangkun.

Asked about the Arab-European dialogue, President Mubarak said: It is a start and a dialogue. The Arabs must sit down together and devise a strategy for the future in the face of the united stand of the EC in 1992. He stressed that there must be a paper that the experts will study prior to submitting it to the Arab summit so that the Arabs can have a particular view with which they can face the European stand.

About his expectations for peace in the Middle East and the Gulf in the 1990's, President Mubarak said: We hope that peace will prevail. We also hope that the debt problems in our Third World and our African Continent will be solved and that we would reach solutions to these problems; otherwise grave catastrophes will occur affecting both the Third World and the rich world.

Replying to a question on whether the contents of the message he received this morning from Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad mean that diplomatic relations between the two countries will be resumed soon, President Mubarak said: We are in contact. I sent the Egyptian information minister to see President al-Asad yesterday and he will send an envoy to see me in few days time. He added: Contacts between us are constant. Consultations between Egypt and Syria are constant and we must look toward the future and the development of relations.

Comments on Ties, Cooperation

NC1812162589 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Chinese President Yang Shangkun and the delegation accompanying him arrived in Cairo this afternoon on a 4-day visit. It is the Chinese president's first visit to Egypt and comes at the invitation of President Mubarak.

President Husni Mubarak and the Chinese ambassador to Cairo received the guest at Cairo airport. President Mubarak then escorted the distinguished guest to al-Qubbah presidential palace where an official reception ceremony was held. People's Assembly Speaker Dr Rif'at al-Mahjub, Prime Minister Dr 'Atif Sidqi, Consultative Council Speaker Dr Mustafa Kamal Hilmi, assistant to the President Muhammad 'Abd-al-Halim Abu-Ghazalah, the deputy prime ministers, a number of ministers, the Armed Forces chief of staff, the governor of Cairo, the commanders of the chief branches of the Armed Forces, Chinese Embassy staff members, and members of the Chinese community in Cairo also attended the reception.

The two leaders will hold a session of talks at the presidential palace tomorrow morning. The talks will deal with promoting bilateral cooperation, particularly trade and economic cooperation, the Middle East issue, and the current international situation.

An escort of honor under Egyptian Industry Ministry Muhammad 'Abd-al-Wahhab will accompany the Chinese president during his visit.

In a statement after his arrival, the Chinese president expressed great satisfaction at visiting Egypt which he said has a long history and noble traditions. He expressed, on behalf of his country's government and people, appreciation for Egypt's Government and people. He added that Egypt and China are among the countries which have a long history of civilization whose peoples have made prominent and unforgettable contributions to civilization. He said that both countries were subjected in modern times to similar suffering and injustice at the hands of imperialism and colonialism. He remarked: We are currently confronted with the same historic calling, represented by the need to maintain world peace while at the same time reviving our national economies. Our two peoples are intimately joined by similar experiences and common goals.

The Chinese president added: I am looking forward to meeting with President Mubarak and senior Egyptian officials in order to exchange views on bilateral relations and international issues of mutual interest.

The Chinese president voiced confidence that his visit to Egypt would boost the existing amicable cooperation between Egypt and China.

A delegation consisting of a member of the Chinese State Council, the Chinese finance minister, the Chinese deputy foreign minister, the deputy minister of foreign economic relations and trade, and the Chinese ambassador to Cairo is accompanying the Chinese president.

Holds 'Private' Talks With Mubarak

NC1812192089 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and Chinese President Yang Shangkun held a private session of talks lasting for approximately an hour at the presidential offices this evening.

President Mubarak then hosted a dinner banquet at the presidential palace in Heliopolis in honor of his guest and the delegation accompanying his excellency. The banquet was attended by senior state officials.

The Chinese president had arrived in Cairo this afternoon for a 4-day visit to Egypt.

Attends Dinner at Heliopolis

NC1812214889 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2008 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak held a dinner banquet at the presidential headquarters in Heliopolis this evening in honor of Chinese President Yang Shangkun and the delegation accompanying him. President Mubarak delivered the following speech at the dinner banquet:

In the name of God, the merciful, and compassionate. Your Excellency President Yang Shangkun, dear friends:

With all the profound feelings of amity and friendship I welcome you to Egypt, which is linked with your noble country by the closest ties. The two countries are joined together by a pioneering human march toward peace and progress.

The special relationship between the two countries and peoples is based on firm historical and cultural factors represented in their advanced societies since the dawn of history, committed to sublime moral values. They were based on promoting the welfare of mankind and the sublimity of his [not further identified] message in life as a maker of glory and civilization and advocate of peace and good.

This distinguished relationship grew stronger in recent times when the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1956. They joined in the establishment of the principles of peaceful coexistence and in crystalizing the independent course of the peoples of the Third World toward liberation, peace, and reconstruction. This joint march was reinforced through meetings and visits of officials from the two countries on various levels in an effort to deepen mutual understanding and achieve creative interaction between the two peoples in the various fields.

President Mubarak added: Within this framework I had the good fortune to visit your friendly country several times and acquaint myself with its numerous historical sites and the achievements of its great people in the past and present.

This close relationship was also deepened through the close proximity of positions on the important international and regional issues, which have engaged the attention of our struggling peoples, especially as the world is witnessing successive concrete developments.

We both welcome the reduction of tension and polarization between the East and West and call for the utilization of the existing atmosphere of international detente to reach agreement on a number of measures in the field of nuclear and conventional weapons disarmament, ending the danger of the outbreak of a destructive world war, the establishment of international relations on the principles of justice [words indistinct] to all the states to contribute to the formulation of new concepts for coexistence and cooperation, far removed from the practice of domination and control.

President Mubarak continued: The two countries also call for the establishment of a new international economic order that will protect the interests of developing nations and preserve their right to direct their resources and energies to serve the causes of growth, technological development, and enhanced production. This aims to attain a greater measure of self-reliance and to consecrate the principle of giving priority to dealing with other Third World countries and uniting their efforts to overcome the problems that face them, chiefly the indebtedness issue.

All of this requires that the role of the Third World and nonaligned nations be enhanced in boosting the process of achievement, in defining the features of the new world, and in strengthening the North-South dialogue. This in turn requires added coordination among the developing nations and efforts to bring their views closer regarding the conditions necessary to establish a balance of interests among various countries regardless of the disparity in their level of industrial and technological progress.

Such a rapprochement of views can also be attained regarding regional issues, notably issues of interest to Middle East countries such as the Palestinian issue. Your country was in the vanguard of the international forces which struggled to achieve a comprehensive and just settlement of this issue that would be based on the land-for-peace principle and on upholding the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, to express their independent identity, and to exercise their free will.

China also supported ending the Iraq-Iran conflict on the basis of implementing all the clauses and rulings of UN Security Council Resolution 598. It also shares our concern to establish peace and stability in Lebanon and to give its people the opportunity to decide their own affairs and attain reconciliation among its sons without foreign intervention.

President Mubarak said: China has been and will continue to be a pioneering force in supporting the struggle of African nations on their path of development and progress, and in assisting their legitimate struggle against colonialism and exploitation and their right to end the system of apartheid and racial discrimination in the southern part of our glorious continent. In return, Egypt shares your concern for Asian issues, chiefly those of Afghanistan, Kampuchea, and Korea. It works alongside you for the sake of attaining solutions that reflect the right of the fraternal Asian peoples in these countries to self-determination and to choose an appropriate formula for growth and development.

Friends, again we welcome the visit of dear friend President Yang Shangkun to our country. We are confident that this visit will contribute to enhancing cooperation between us in various spheres. Tomorrow we will inaugurate the hall of international conferences whose construction was a luminous fruit of Chinese-Egyptian cooperation and a shining symbol of true fraternity between the two noble peoples.

Allow me to invite you to stand up in greeting President Yang Shangkun, to all the present friends, sons of the People's Republic of China, and to the close ties between the two countries and peoples.

Praises Ties With Egypt

NC1912060989 Cairo MENA in English 2258 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, Dec 18 (MENA)—Visiting Chinese President Yang Shangkun voiced here tonight sincere sentiments of friendship harboured by the Chinese people for the Egyptian people. My visit to Egypt comes upon President Husni Mubarak's kind invitation, said the Chinese president in a toast speech given in his honour by President Mubarak. [sentence as received]

Attainments of the old civilizations of Egypt and China were lauded by the Chinese president, who also reported the two countries as having been tirelessly struggling in a march of exploration of the secrets of nature so much so that their valuable contributions enriched human civilization. He also showed them as having contributed to establishing and maintaining independence, promoting world peace, facing hegemony and developing national economy and culture.

"We shall never forget that Egypt was the first Arab and African state to establish diplomatic relations with China," said the Chinese president, recalling how the Chinese people also stood unswervingly by the Egytian people in resistance to external aggression and in liberations of the occupied territories. He said Egypt-China ties of friendship withstood the test of time and stood out as a model.

The Chinese president said the government and people of Egypt are now seeking under the leadership of President Husni Mubarak to internally promote democracy and develop economy and externally establish peace and stability in the region. He said Egypt undertakes a growingly important international plane role which acquired wide-ranging international community praise. [sentence as received]

The Chinese president welcomed the universal shift from confrontation to dialogue and from tension to detente as it would be conducive to safeguarding world peace and promoting development. He noted, however that various latent contradictions and factors of instability in the world were still existing. Peace and development are two major issues that are facing the present-day world," [no opening quotation marks as received] said the Chinese president in the course of a review of the currently unacceptable world economic order and the serious difficulties faced by various developing countries. Both China and the Arab countries belong to the Third World, he said showing how the Chinese people had traditional ties of friendship with the Arab states. He said the Chinese Government always supports the Arab and Palestinian people's just struggle for recovering their usurped territories and their national rights. He said the Chinese Government also supports their efforts to find a political settlement to the Middle East issue. It supports the convocation of the international conference on Middle East peace and initiation of all forms of dialogue deemed appropriate by the parties concerned. It also lauds solidarity and cooperation among Arab states, he said.

The Chinese president said China will pursue its firm and inalienable support of the African people's just struggle against hegemony, imperialism and racism. He then reiterated congratulation on President Husni Mubarak's election as head of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Commentator Reviews Visit

NC1812195689 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1840 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Bahiy-al-Din Shu'ayb editorial from the "Talking Newspaper" program]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Today Egypt received a dear guest from China, President Yang Shangkun, as a lofty symbol of a people who are linked by good ties with Egypt. Egyptian-Chinese relations are characterized by amity, warmth, and mutual understanding. These characteristics have been translated into interests and cooperation in all economic, trade, cultural, and political spheres over the past 25 years. The Conferences Palace in Nasr city has been the fruit of this sincere bilateral cooperation. China built this major building using the most modern scientific methods as a gift to the friendly Egyptian people.

Egyptian-Chinese relations, which began at the Bandung conference, were later expanded, and stressed China's support for the Arab nation in all its crises, from the tripartite aggression of 1956 and the 1967 aggression, through the period of rebuilding the Armed Forces in the wake of the June 1967 defeat and until the October 1973 war.

Undoubtedly China, which has a prominent status on the international political scene in general and in Asia in particular, is careful to maintain its good relations with Egypt and other Arab peoples. The Chinese president's current tour of the Middle East and Arab countries, following the recent troubles in China, are a sign that these troubles no longer exert any pressure on the government and that the Chinese authorities have contained the crisis, handled its consequences, and on their part have carried out a measure of internal reforms which the students had been demanding.

The Chinese view at that time emphasized that the country's circumstances do not permit a method of violent dialogue because stability is a national requirement that rises above everthing else. If the door of chaos were left wide open, China would be subjected to a wave of troubles liable to paralyze the country's economic activity at a time when all departments seek to boost production and to modernize work methods in all fields.

Apparently, the Chinese view has triumphed after China handled the crisis with much firmness and some flexibility in accepting the reforms which the students demanded. Proof of this is that the United States, which initially opposed the Chinese Government's stand on the incidents, later withdrew all its objections. [sentence as heard] A senior U.S. official, namely the secretary of state [as heard] paid a visit to Beijing during which he reviewed U.S.-Chinese ties. A new phase of close cooperation in all spheres began between the two countries.

Many observers believe that China's ability to contain its recent crisis has not only helped to consolidate stability in the country but has also infused an atmosphere of calm in all parts of Asia which is full of crises and problems.

As Cairo today receives the president of the People's Republic of China, it receives a friend whose people stood by the Egyptian people and other Arab peoples in all circumstances. The mutual issues of both countries require them to embark on well prepared coordination and a constant exchange of views in a way that serves the good of both sides.

Yemeni Ministesr Continue Meeting With Mubarak

NC1712152789 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1420 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Excerpts] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA)—Yahya al-'Arshi, the minister for unity affairs in the Yemen Arab Republic [YAR], and Rashid Thabit, minister of state for unity affairs in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen [PDRY], held a news conference today in which they explained the serious unionist steps recently taken by YAR President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and by 'Ali Salim al-Bayd, secretary general of the Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP] in the PDRY.

The two ministers said that the two Yemens share a common background which was the starting point for unity between the two peoples at all levels. This has made the Yemeni citizen more eager to move his national issue to the stage of putting the final touches on the declaration of unity. [passage omitted]

Regarding the political form of the unionist state, Al-'Arshi and Thabit stressed that the political organization committee will discuss at its next meeting the future of political organizations in both countries within the framework of the new constitution and giving the citizens the right to establish labor unions and political organizations while benefiting from past experiences. They added that there are a number of options before the committee, but more important than these options is that this should be done in a political way. [passage omitted]

Replying to a question on the Yemeni opposition groups abroad and their stand on the unionist state, Yahya al-'Arshi said that Yemeni unity will tackle all problems between the two countries and that the January events in the PDRY were contained through the cooperation of the two countries.

Regarding the internal situation in the PDRY, Rashid Thabit said that an investment law is being prepared now that will have many guarantees for capital. There is also a law on publications and the freedom to publish newspapers. He added that the YSP has proposed to the masses a plan on the basic trends for comprehensive political and economic reforms with the aim of starting a new stage for building the new society because reforms cannot be achieved without releasing all the people's resources.

The two ministers arrived in Cairo on Thursday and had met with President Husni Mubarak.

Depart Cairo 17 Dec

NC1712172489 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1705 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Excerpt] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA)—Rashid Thabit, minister of state for unity affairs in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and Yahya al-'Arshi, minister for unity affairs in the Yemen Arab Republic, left Cairo this afternoon at the end of a visit lasting several days. [passage omitted]

Yemeni Official on ACC News Agencies Conference

NC1712215489 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2015 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA)—Yahya Salih al-Shawkani, director of the Yemeni News Agency SABA, left Cairo this evening after a week-long visit to Egypt to attend the first conference of the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC] news agencies.

In a departure statement, Yahya al-Shawkani said that the conference was successful because it serves ACC's pan-Arab objectives, particularly the agreement for the coordination of the ACC states' news agencies' offices in world states, especially in the Arab states.

He said that an agreement has been reached on the technical concepts of the fields of technical cooperation and collective hiring of satellite channels.

He added that the conference has submitted a recommendation to the ACC four states' information ministers for the establishment of a data bank. He indicated that this project will be useful for the news agencies but it is very costly.

He also referred to the fields of cooperation among the networks [not further identified] and the exchange of visits and said that the second conference will be held in the Jordanian capital after 6 months.

Zairian Foreign Minister Delivers Message

NC1712193889 Cairo MENA in English 1910 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, Dec 17 (MENA)—Mguz a Karl-i-Bond, Zaire's foreign minister, arrived here tonight on a one-day visit to Egypt carrying a message to President Husni Mubarak from President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire. Ambassador 'Aziz Sayf al-Nasr, assistant foreign minister, welcomed the Zairian official at the airport. The Zairian minister visited here on Wednesday last and met with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy premier and foreign minister. He then left Egypt for Brussels on a brief visit to Belgium.

Received by Mubarak

NC1812171389 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received Zairian Foreign Minister Nguz a Karl-i-Bond who announced after the meeting that he had delivered a message from Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko to President Mubarak in the latter's capacity as OAU chairman. He added that the message includes a report on the economic situation in Africa, particularly the continent's debt crisis and ways of confronting it.

The Zairian foreign minister said that President Mubarak shows great understanding of these problems. He praised the president's method of dealing with the indebtedness issue.

He noted that President Mobutu plays a mediator's role in the Angolan crisis. He added: President Mobutu has sent me to be briefed by President Mubarak on the crisis of southern Sudan. We are doing our utmost to resolve the Sudanese crisis. I will carry to President Mobutu a report on the results of this meeting.

Togolese Foreign Minister Arrives Cairo 17 Dec

NC1712192989 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1835 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA)—Yaovi Adodo, Togolese foreign minister and chairman of the OAU six-member committee for resolving the Senegalese-Mauritanian dispute, arrived in Cairo this evening on a visit of several days to Egypt.

Adodo said that he will present to President Husni Mubarak, in his capacity as current OAU chairman, a report on the results of the committee's recent discussions with the parties concerned.

Yaovi Adodo said that the committee decided to make a fact-finding tour of Mauritania and Senegal in order to determine the causes of the problem between the two countries preparatory to resolving them.

The committee members asked Yaovi Adodo to assume the chairmanship when committee chairman Dr Butrus Ghali became ill recently.

Ambassador 'Aziz Sayf-al-Nasr, assistant foreign minister, met Adodo at the airport.

Meets With Mubarak

NC1812200089 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1445 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received Togolese Foreign Minister Yaovi Adodo at noon today.

Al-Baz Returns From 2-Day Visit to Oman

NC1712204989 Cairo MENA in English 2040 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, Dec 17 (MENA)—First Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Usamah al-Baz, who also doubles as director of the president's political affairs office, returned here tonight from Muscat. The two-day visit came within the framework of constant consultations between Egypt and Oman over Arab issues and stepping up relations between the two countries.

AL-AHRAM Cited on Relations With Libya

NC1812090689 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0730 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—AL-AHRAM notes the serious and positive steps being taken to further strengthen Egyptian-Libyan relations and to revive their old glory, adding that the interaction between the two peoples has proceeded without obstruction since President Mubarak's recent visit to Libya.

In its editorial today, the paper says: Optimism about positive future interaction between the two countries is enhanced by their agreement to give priority to Egyptian workers in Libya. This, the paper notes, will be done through specific measures to replace foreign with Egyptian labor in certain projects within 2 years.

The paper adds that the principle of mutual benefit demonstrated in recent Egyptian-Libyan agreements would guarantee the highest degree of stabilized and balanced bilateral relations.

The paper calls for a thorough consideration of the smallest details and for adherence to the principls of Egyptian policy which stresses frankness and openness in discussing differences of opinion so the two countries can reach an acceptable formula for their agreements.

Al-Sharif Comments on Relations With Syria

NC1812120389 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1120 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has received a report from Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif on the latter's visit to sister Syria.

Following his meeting with Mubarak this afternoon, Al-Sharif stated that he had briefed the president on the outcome of his meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. He added that he had conveyed a message to President Mubarak from Syrian President al-Asad on a number of issues which concern both countries.

Minister al-Sharif said that the message also deals with the future of Egyptian-Syrian relations and efforts to make these relations play their natural role in the political and economic spheres.

In his statement, al-Sharif remarked that the messages exchanged between Presidents al-Asad and Mubarak reiterate the two countries' determination to further bolster their historic ties and to establish natural relations in the various fields.

Al-Sharif added that the Syrian president told him that he would send a high-ranking envoy to Cairo in the next few days to meet with President Mubarak. The envoy will carry a message to Mubarak from the Syrian president on further positive steps leading to improved relations.

Al-Sharif concluded by noting President Mubarak's appreciation of the Syrian president and his emphasis on the distinctive ties linking the Egyptian and Syrian presidents and peoples and on the long history and common struggle which brought them together.

Opposition Parties Denounce Explosion

NC1712151489 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1350 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA)—Political parties in Egypt have denounced the explosion yesterday that happened when Interior Minister Zaki Badr's vehicle was passing. They said they are against all forms of terrorism and that legal channels are the best way to hold a dialogue.

Liberal Party leader Mustafa Kamil Murad said that his party denounces any criminal act based on killing, sabotage, and physical liquidation because this is a dangerous course that only leads to the worst possible consequences. He added that the Liberal Party condemns this attempt because Zaki Badr is the interior minister of a legitimate government and the opposition derives its legitimacy from the system's legitimacy. He added that the place for any difference of opinion is the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council and symposiums.

Lutfi Wakid, assistant secretary general of the National Progressive Unionist Grouping, said that his party opposes assassinations in general and believes that debates and legal channels are the best way to hold a dialogue.

Yasin Siraj-al-Din, leader of al-Wafd Party's parliamentary body, said that yesterday's attempt is completely rejected and that no one approves of it. He added that democratic dialogue through legal channels is the only way.

Dr Muhammad Hilmi Murad, deputy leader of the Socialist Labor Party, said that such an action is against the law and is contrary to all divine and human laws. He added: As intellectuals who are concerned about our dear Egypt, we must deal with such cases calmly and with more constructive dialogue.

Counsellor Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, People's Assembly member from the Labor Party, said: Such acts take us into a dangerous whirlpool that would lead to a deep abyss that we do not want for our country. He added: Because of our ethics, creed, and policy we cannot accept such terrorist behavior and we find no excuse for it.

Al-Ummah Party leader Ahmad al-Subahi said that the attack on the interior minister is an attack on the entire homeland. He added: We are against terrorism and we fight it wherever it is present.

Payment of Former Workers in Libya Arranged

NC1712151989 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1415 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA)—The Egyptian Trade Union Federation and the Libyan Producers Federation have decided to form a joint committee that will be entrusted with the task of completing the procedures for disbursing the back pay and insurance payments to former Egyptian workers in Libya. The committee will review these workers' files and contact the concerned departments in order to reimburse the workers as soon as possible.

Agreement on this was reached during a meeting of the two federations today that was chaired by Mukhtar

'Abd-al-Hamid, first deputy chairman of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation, and Khalid Jallud, chairman of the Libyan Producers Federation.

The two delegations agreed to cooperate in all labor spheres, to hold training and cultural courses for workers of both states, and to coordinate efforts at international, African, and Arab conferences for the good of the fateful economic causes of the Arab nation.

Libya

Syria's Al-Shar' Delivers Al-Asad Message

JN1912192689 Damascus Television Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad has sent a letter to his brother, Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the 1 September Revolution. Faruq al-Shar', foreign minister, and Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, delivered the letter to Col al-Qadhdafi when he received them today. The letter deals with several topics of mutual interest to the two fraternal countries.

Meets With Liaison Official

LD1912200289 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1845 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Tripoli, 19 Dec (JANA)—The brother secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation has conferred with brother Faruq al-Shar', foreign minister of fraternal Syria, and Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs of fraternal Syria, who arrived in Tripoli this afternoon for a visit to the great Jamahiriyah.

The meeting was an opportunity to examine brotherly relations between the two fraternal countries and a number of Arab and (?international) topics of mutual interest.

France Said Adopting Anti-Libyan Measures

LD1912224189 Tripoli Television Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] The brother leader of the revolution's recent message to the French president on the religious and racial persecution carried out by French authorities against Muslim female students in France, and on the situation of Muslims in France in general, has led to an official French anti-Great Jamahiriyah reaction; that is, the French Government's reversal of its decision to release the Arab Libyan aircraft that are being held in France and its refusal to hand over military equipment to the Great Jamahiriyah.

Observers think that such a positions was adopted by France as a result of the Great Jamahiriyah's commitment to shoulder its responsibilities toward Muslim causes, not only in France, but in the world as a whole.

Al-Qadhdhafi Receives Departing Iranian Envoy

LD1412134989 Tripoli JANA in English 1826 GMT 13 Dec 89

[Text] Tripoli, Al Kanoun [December] 13, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution received the ambassador of the Islamic of Iran [as received] to great Jamahiriyah on the occasion of his end of mission and work.

The leader of the revolution gave the Iranian ambassador a letter to the Iranian leadership.

Cited on Relations

LD1312233189 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 12 Dec 89

[Text] Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, Libyan leader, held a farewell meeting with our country's ambassador in Libya. He said that the Libyan leadership and Muslim nation will continue to stand resolutely, more than ever, by the Islamic Republic of Iran and will remain a party to the alliance with Iran. They regard this as a revolutionary and impregnable principle.

Offering his warm greetings to the leader of the Islamic revolution and president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he expressed satisfaction with the results of the latest meeting of the joint commission for economic cooperation held in Tehran. He called for the expansion of such cooperation.

Airline Cooperation Minutes Signed With Jordan

LD1412101289 Tripoli Television Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 11 Dec 89

[Text] Joint cooperation minutes between the Libyan Arab Airlines and Royal Jordanian Airlines have been signed in Tripoli.

The minutes, which were signed by the brother secretary of the people's committee of the Libyan Arab Airlines and by the executive president and director general of Royal Jordanian Airlines, include a cooperation program to exchange experience in the technical and commercial fields.

PDRY, YAR Delegations Begin Visit 16 Dec

EA1812081989 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 0330 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] A joint Yemeni delegation, headed by brothers 'Abd-al-Qawi Muthanna Hadi, member of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen Central Committee and minister of installations and housing, and Ahmad Muhammad Luqman, Yemen Arab Republic [YAR] minister of labor and social affairs and member of the Permanent Committee, arrived in Tripoli yesterday evening.

Brother Dr Muhammad Lutfi, secretary general of the General People's Committee for Planning, and the two charges d'affaires of the two parts of the homeland in Tripoli welcomed them.

In a statement to JANA, Brother Ahmad Muhammad Luqman said the delegation was carrying a joint message from brothers 'Ali Salim al-Bid and Colonel 'Ali Abdullah Salih, to brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, the leader of the Libyan 1st September Revolution. The message is about the results of the historical Aden unionist agreement, which was signed on 30 November, for the realization of Yemeni unity aimed at promoting Arab unity.

Morocco

Egypt's 'Abd-al-Majid Arrives for Visit 16 Dec

LD1612221489 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Egyptian deputy prime minister and foreign minister, arrived tonight in Rabat. He brings a message from Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak to his brother, His Majesty King Hassan II. At Rabat-Sale Airport, the Egyptian minister made the following statement:

[Begin 'Abd-al-Majid recording] In fact, the visit comes at the request of President Husni Mubarak to deliver a written message to His Majesty King Hassan II. I am pleased to be entrusted with this mission. I will, God willing, meet his majesty the king and present the message to him. I will also review the various positions regarding the development of the Middle East question, particularly the Palestinian issue, the current developments in the region, and also the preparations for the Paris meeting of the Euro-Arab dialogue. I will also have the opportunity to hold talks with my brother and colleague, Foreign Minister Abdellatif Filali, on matters of mutual interest, whether they involve bilateral relations or international developments. I must add that relations of cordiality, brotherhood, and friendship exist between Morocco and Egypt, and I feel that I am at home. [end recording]

Foreign Minister Abdellatif Filali; Moulay Ahmed Cherkaoui, secretary of state for foreign affairs; the Egyptian ambassador to Rabat; and a number of officials were at the airport to receive the Egyptian minister.

Received by King Hassan II

LD1812203889 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] His Majesty King Hassan II received at noon today at the Royal Palace the deputy prime minister and foreign minister in the Arab Republic of Egypt, Dr 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid. During this meeting, the Egyptian envoy handed his majesty a personal message from His Excellency Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State Moulay Ahmed Alaoui, adviser to his majesty Mr Ahmed Reda Guedira, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Abdellatif Filali, in addition to Egyptian Ambassador to Morocco Muhsin 'Ali Bishr and his majesty's ambassador in Cairo.

Saharan Delegation Visits European Parliament

LD1512142989 Rabat MAP in English 1220 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] Strasbourg, Dec. 15 (MAP)—A delegation from the Saharan provinces has called on the European Parliament to do all it can to put an end to the ordeal of the Saharans sequestrated in Tindouf. The delegation, on a visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg since Tuesday, held a series of talks with European MP's [member of parliament] from various tendencies to explain to them the reality of the situation in the Sahara.

The Saharan delegation is composed of two Moroccan MP's and five former Polisario members, including Omar Hadrami, one of its six founding members who recently reintegrated the motherland. In a communique to the 518 European MP's and to the international media accredited here, the delegation's members placed special emphasis on "inhuman conditions in which live the authentic Saharan population, sequestrated in Tindouf".

It also laid emphasis on the campaigns of repression and reprisal, inflicted upon the Saharans following the events of October 1988. During those events, Saharans went into demonstrations voicing their desire to return to the motherland. The period the Polisario qualified as a "military lull" was but the repression campaign they engaged to crush the rebellion in the camps, since the true Saharan natives had clearly dissociated themselves from the intransigent and bellicose attitude of those native of Mauritania or southern Algeria. [sentence as received]

In their communique, the delegation's members made a moving appeal to the European Parliament, the "greatest democratic concentration in the world", to help the Saharan families in Tindouf return home freely as [words indistinct] claim.

As the European Parliament itself had advocated in March 1981, the communique said, the best help these populations could receive is to be definitely resettled in their native land. The best means to reach this, it further said, is the referendum the international community has called for upon Morocco's request in 1981.

Some Polisario leaders non-native of the Western Sahara continue setting up obstacles to delay holding such a referendum, because they know that identifying the populations eligible to vote will ipso facto exclude them from any participation in the referendum.

The United Nations, the communique stressed, constitutes the proper framework so U.N. secretary general's good will mission, undertaken in cooperation with the interested and concerned parties, reach a result. In this respect, the Saharan delegation noted with satisfaction the recent statements by the U.N. secretary general on his intention to visit the region early next year to pursue his efforts. The Polisario's recent aggressions against Morocco, going against the peace dynamics in the region, can only be motivated by a bellicose intention to revive discord and mistrust among the Maghreban countries, the only thing upon which the Polisario strives.

Sudan

Al-Bashir Says Israel Fans 'Fires of Rebellion'

EA1812082789 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 1410 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Speech by President 'Umar al-Bashir at the graduation of Military College cadets at Khartoum Stadium on 16 December—live]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. God says in the holy Koran: Our soldiers will be victorious. [passage omitted]

Brothers, Israel and world Zionism [word indistinct] supported by the forces of evil and aggression, are collaborating with the communists and the enemies of the nation. Israel invented causes and concluded alliances with some of the neighboring countries. It has striven to fan the fires of rebellion in the south and has given support, weapons, and men so that it remains a thorn in the (?side) of the nation. The rebellion and the rebels who have taken up weapons against the lawful authority of the state are a tool and a trumpet for Israel and the colonizing states, an instrument of malice and deadly venom.

However, the revolution, which was aware of the dimensions of the plot, decided to narrow the differences between itself and the rebellion. Therefore, it announced the general amnesty and declared a cease-fire on more than one occasion, in the hope that the rebels would return to the fold of the homeland, sit down to discuss and settle differences, and abandon conflict and fighting. [passage omitted]

Al-Bashir Says Communists 'Weaken' Unity

EA1512134689 Khartoum SUNA in English 0915 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] Khartoum, 15 December (SUNA)—The chairman of the Revolution Command Council, General 'Umar al-Bashir, has pledged to continue endeavours despite the differences that emerged during the Nairobi peace talks with the rebel movement and the government delegation.

Addressing a mass rally marking the annual celebration of Martyrs Day, Gen al-Bashir Thursday said the revolution would exert its utmost efforts to halt the south war which is impeding the country's progress. The rally organised in Shandi, the Northern Region, was attended by thousands of citizens who came to express support for the revolution.

"While the Armed Forces are achieving successive victories and destroying citadels of the mutiny and conspiracy, the locally and international defeated communists and their like are trying to split the ranks and weaken the internal front for the interest of the rebel movement", Gen al-Bashir told the crowd. Gen al-Bashir stressed the failure of these attempts due to the solidarity of the people, who recognise the dimensions of the communists plots.

Gen al-Bashir has reiterated the revolution's resolve to crush any attempts aiming at splitting the ranks, impeding production or undermining the country's economy.

Gen al-Bashir, who is currently in the Northern Region, said the celebration was organised for the first time in a military area "in recognition of the revolution's to the martyrs of the area" of the northern region of Shamaliyah. [sentence as received]

Gen al-Bashir has meanwhile commended Sudanese Armed Forces fighters the country over. He said the revolution would give top priority to the Armed Forces by developing their fighting capabilities in order to enable the Sudanese soldiers defend the unity and stability of the country. He said the revolution would give due attention to the families of the martyrs.

Dialogue Committee Briefed on Nairobi Peace Talks

EA1512135389 Khartoum SUNA in English 0922 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Excerpts] Khartoum, 15 December (SUNA)—Members of the steering committee of the national dialogue conference on peace issues were, Thursday, briefed on the outcome of the recent peace negotiations between the government and the rebel movement delegation in Nairobi. [passage omitted]

The briefing has highlighted that the move for peace talks was taken after the government had concluded a detailed peace programme represented in the national dialogue conference's recommendations, which have provided the key answers for the disputed issues.

It also revealed that the rebel movement, during the talks, had attempted to raise the relief question in order to hinder discussion of essential issues and receive the international opinion that the rebels are keen towards bringing peace. The briefing showed the rebel movement, when insisting on the question of operation Lifeline Sudan, was just trying to secure its food supplies only.

According to the briefing the government delegation had succeeded in preventing the rebel movement from getting any political or moral gains by discussing issues of a sovereignty nature.

The briefing has meanwhile disclosed that the Nairobi peace talks were successful in complelling the rebel movement to forward its program for solving Sudan's problems. It is also manifested that the government delegation had succeeded in persuading the movement to be radical in refusing the participation of the dissolved Ummah, DUP [Democratic Unionist Party] and the National Islamic Front in the proposed broad-based government. The rebel movement's rejection to any participation of the dissolved parties in the proposed government actually confirms its tendency to violate the charters which it had already signed with other political forces, the briefing showed.

The briefing further included that the movement's demand for assimilating its troops in the Armed Forces at a rate of 50 percent as a despise [as received] for the Sudanese people's respect for their Armed Forces.

Libyan Delegation Begins Visit 15 Dec

EA1812114789 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 2145 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] A delegation from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah, led by Mr Musa Ahmad, secretary of the Libyan Public Corporation for Agricultural Production, arrived in the country at noon today. The delegation comprises representatives of a group of companies that specialize in the supply of commodities, meat and fodder, and other areas of external trade. The delegation intends to review the trade protocol between Sudan and Libya which was signed last year, and to boost cooperation between the two countries.

Paper Cited on 'Evil' BBC Transmissions

AB1812104189 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 1330 GMT 17 Dec 89

[From the press review]

[Text] On the last page of AL-INQADH AL-WATANI, Mr (Fitawi) in his column Mawaqif [stands], under the heading "British Radio Is Zionist," wrote: Radio London, which has the capacity to reach any point on earth on beamed frequencies and with all tempting material resources, has continued to transmit evil to the weak nations and to disseminate venom enveloped in fat so that the people of the Third World can drink it in all innocence and with good intentions.

This radio has been targeting Sudan and its unity. It conducts itself by omission and commission, with regard to the report by Amnesty International concerning Sudan, with the aim of offending us, government, and people.

SUNA, ANATOLIA PRESS To Renew Agreement

EA1612090689 Khartoun SUNA in French 1515 GMT 14 Dec 89

[Text] Khartoum, 14 Dec (SUNA)—Muhammad Khawjali Salihin, director-general of SUNA, held discussions today with the Turkish ambassador to Sudan, on bilateral cooperation between SUNA and the Turkish ANATOLIA PRESS NEWS AGENCY. Mr Salihin told the Turkish diplomat that SUNA wished to renew the cooperation agreement it signed with ANATOLIA PRESS in 1982. The director general [words indistinct] that ANATOLIA PRESS gives SUNA journalists under the cultural protocol between the two friendly countries.

Bank of Sudan Relaxes Currency Controls

EA1612080489 Khartoun SUNA in Arabic 1430 GMT 14 Dec 89

[Text] Khartoum, 14 Dec (SUNA)—The Bank of Sudan has decided to allow banks accredited in the country to accept checks issued by banks and/or moneychangers outside the country to beneficiaries inside the country, without the need for customs declarations. This decision is an amendment to an earlier decision issued at the end of July within the framework of new regulations on foreign currency.

New Budget Amendment Affects Customs Duties

EA1612114489 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1430 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] Khartoum, 15 Dec (SUNA)—A responsible source at the Customs and Revenue Tax Department has stated that the current budget amendment, which affects the groups (?eligible) for custom duties, by reducing them from 35 groups to 14, are meant to boost customs revenues, and solve problems experienced by exporters and importers. It said the amendment included increasing some groups and reducing others, pointing out that the increase had includes some goods [word indistinct].

In a statement to SUNA, the source revealed that the duty rates for some basic goods, such as farm tools, spare parts, and industrial machinery, had been maintained, whereas other rates had been modified, such as for cars, (?personal weapons), and others. It further added that the new (?import) tax was (?imposed) at the end of last June, on goods imported from Egypt.

A 60 percent tax was imposed on cement, 10 percent on furniture, and 40 percent on aluminium articles. The source said these rates had been set to protect local [word indistinct] products from competition, and for the sake of customs justice. The source said all [word indistinct] were exempt within the framework of the Sudanese-Egyptian trade protocol, as there were similar production rates in Egypt.

Officials Discuss Food Shortage in Juba, Wau

EA1612091689 Khartounm SUNA in English 0920 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] Khartoum, 15 December (SUNA)—Relief and rehabilitation minister, Peter Urad, Thursday conferred with the chairman of the donors group in Sudan for the current month, Mr Boss [as received]. The meeting was said to have discussed the second phase of the Operation Lifeline Sudan and the date set for convening the donors conference, scheduled for the second half of next January. The two men also reviewed the possibility of providing food supplies to meet the shortage in Juba and Wau cities.

Meanwhile, Mr Urad left for Juba carrying some 28 tonnes of relief supplies. Some 100 tonnes of sorghum and 57 tonnes of edible oil and milk were allocated to Juba.

Tunisia

President Ben Ali Previews Visit to Iraq, Ties

JN1312162189 Baghdad INA in English 1500 GMT 13 Dec 89

[Text] Tunis, Dec 13, INA—Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has stressed that he is looking forward at meeting President Saddam Husayn for talks on Arab and international issues.

In statements to INA correspondents here today, President Ben Ali said that his visit due to Iraq would focus on means of backing up Arab solidarity and reviewing distinguished bilateral ties, expressing his keenness to keep up with strengthening them to the two countries' benefit.

President Ben Ali also extolled Iraq for its peaceful efforts and readiness to accept all good offices and initiatives aimed at stability, coexistence and cooperation in the region away from all forms of threat.

President Ben Ali expressed confidence that the peaceful option to which Iraq was adhering confirmed its keenness for settling its conflict with Iran peacefully.

He added that Tunisia, which supported Iraq in defence of its legitimate rights, dignity and sovereignty, reiterated its respect for Iraq's response to all overtures.

The Tunisian president urged Iran to respond to the world peace stressing that it was for the sake of peoples of the region that coexistence and cooperation were based on mutual respect.

Economic, Transport Agreements With Egypt Signed

JN1112183689 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 9 Dec 89 pp 1, 17

[From Sabri Suwaylim in Tunis]

[Excerpts] The higher Egyptian-Tunisian joint committee yesterday wound up its meetings under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Dr 'Atif Sidqi and Tunisian Prime Minister Hamed Karoui by signing 10 cooperation agreements in various fields, especially trade exchange, transportation, encouragement of investment, scientific research, and the establishment of a joint council for businessmen in both countries. In a joint statement after the final session, the two countries stressed the need for continued action to promote bilateral cooperation to reflect the deep ties between the two fraternal peoples. [passage omitted]

The ministers concerned signed the 10 agreements and exchanged instruments of ratification. Minister of Transport Engineer Sulayman Mutawalli and Tunisian Transport Minister Ahmed Smaoui signed three agreements on land, sea, and air transport.

Engineer Mutawalli said the upcoming stage will witness great freedom in the field of passenger and cargo transportation between the two countries. He said the land route via Libya will facilitate the transport of passengers and goods between the three countries. This, he said, will be followed by the establishment of service stations, resthouses, and first aid centers along the road to serve passengers. Each country will take care of building these stations on its territory. The upcoming stage, he added, will also witness the promotion of commercial navigation after both countries have provided major facilities for their ships in their ports.

Economy Minister Yusri Mustafa and Tunisian National Economy Minister Moncef Belaid signed the agreements of economic and financial cooperation and trade exchange.

Dr Mustafa stressed that economic agreements between one Arab country and another are aimed at joint cooperation to deal with economic blocs being established in the world these days.

He said Egypt views cooperation between Egyptian and Tunisian businessmen and the establishment of a joint council for them as a realistic and sound step to promote economic relations between the two countries.

Finance Minister Muhammad al-Razzaz and Tunisian Planning and Finance Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi signed the agreements of financial cooperation, avoidance of duplicity, prevention of tax evasion, and encouragement and protection of investment.

Scientific Research Minister Dr 'Adil 'Izz said after signing a cooperation agreement in the field of scientific research and technology that there is a current need for scientific and technological cooperation to cope with and keep abreast of international developments, since no individual country can do this alone. [passage omitted]

Ruling Party Meets To Discuss Student Unrest

LD1412215589 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 14 Dec 89

[Excerpts] The Political Bureau of the Democratic Constitutional Rally met this morning at the republican palace in Carthage under the chairmanship of Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, chairman of the Rally. [passage omitted]

The Political Bureau discussed the organized disturbances at colleges and secondary schools which violated the law and the democratic trend which has dominated the country's political life since the 7 November change [reference to the overthrow of Bourguiba].

The Political Bureau condemned these disturbances, which, on occasion, led to violent action against educators, pupils, students, and educational institutions. The Political Bureau also condemned the ways by which the youth were misled and incited by fabricated rumors with the aim of pushing them to behave in ways that do not conform to correct educational traditions and that harm the future of our children and our country, particularly since dialogue and consultation have been available as a result of the important achievements of the new era in the fields of democracy and the freedom of expression. The Political Bureau reaffirmed its pride in and appreciation of the message upheld by the educational community.

The Political Bureau studied the results of the symposium organized recently by the Rally on apartheid in South Africa within the framework of the 41st anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. In this context, the president recommended that a regional office of the OAU should be opened in Tunis as a way of supporting the South African people's struggle against the despised apartheid.

Education Organization Makes Appeal to Students

LD1512143989 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] Some of the secondary colleges and institutions witnessed disturbances, which led in some cases to acts of violence.

The Tunisian Organization for Education and Family addressed an appeal to the parents and students. Mr Habib Guersale, chairman of the organization, said:

[Begin Guersale recording] In recent days we saw in a number of institutions and in some areas of Tunisia disturbances, violence, and vandalism at those educational institutions. In some cases it even led to assaults on teachers. All these things disrupted classes. We, as an organization and as parents, expect our sons to study harder in order to secure their success.

Facing this situation, which is foreign to the students, we considered it our duty to stress that education in Tunisia is one of the most valuable gains of the people, and that it is the best tool for achieving prosperity for the family and progress for society. We consider that the educational institution, which was built with the money of this people, should be preserved and protected from any harm, because any harm that befalls it will be shouldered by us all, whether we are a national or a regional group. If a building, a laboratory, or anything else is broken we will shoulder the burden because we will have to renew it and restore it, and we do not accept that the institutions should remain closed and our sons outside of them.

On the other hand, we consider that a wasted school day will benefit no one, and is a loss for the student, in both his education and knowledge, and is also a loss for the family and society. The family and society expect our sons to succeed and to participate in changing social and living conditions.

Faced by this situation, the National Bureau of the Tunisian Organization for Education and Family appeals to the fathers and mothers of students to guide their children and light their way by inviting them to study seriously and to study hard, and not to waste time. On the other hand, [they should also guide their children on] the need to respect the teachers, preserve educational institutions, and protect them as [words indistinct]. [end recording]

Bahrain

Further on Sudanese Official's Visit to Manama

Received by Commerce Minister

JN1912182389 Manama WAKH in English 1530 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Manama, Dec 19 (GNA)—Bahraini Minister of Commerce and Agriculture Habib Ahmad Qasim conferred here this morning with member of the Sudanese National Salvation Revolution Command Council [NSRCC] Col. Salah-al-Din Muhammad Karrar currently visiting the country.

The meeting covered prospects of promoting bilateral cooperation mainly in trade, agricultural and economic fields, effective ways to boost trade activity and the possibility of the contribution in food security projects in Sudan.

The Sudanese official, who is also head of the council's economic committee, arrived in Manama yesterday for a several days' visit to Bahrain.

Confers With Prime Minister

JN1912182489 Manama WAKH in English 1602 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Manama, Dec 19 (GNA)—Bahraini Prime Minister Shaykh Khalifah Ibn-Salman Al Khalifah met here today with member of the Revolutionary Command Council of National Salvation and head of the economic committee in Sudan Colonel Salah-al-Din Muhammad Karrar and his accompanying delegation, currently visiting Bahrain.

The meeting was attended by Bahraini Interior Minister Shaykh Muhammad Ibn-Khalifah Al Khalifah, Commerce and Agriculture Minister Habib Ahmad al-Qasim, Assistant Interior Undersecretary for Immigration and Passports Affairs Shaykh 'Ali Ibn-Khalifah Al Khalifah and the Sudanese Charge d'Affaires to Bahrain 'Izz-al-Din 'Ali 'Abbas.

After the meeting, Col. Salah-al-Din stated that he presented to Shaykh Khalifah a report on the recommendations of the national dialogue conference recently held in Sudan to solve the crisis in the south.

He added that his visit aims at clarifying the latest developments on the Sudanese arena to the Bahraini leadership, within the framework of the joint Arab understanding and integration, pointing out that the trend of the Sudanese leadership is committed to coordination, exchange of views and consultation with the Arab countries.

Oman

Sultan Qabus Hails Yemeni 'Unionist Steps'

EA1812090789 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 0330 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Excerpt] The two brothers, Salim Muhammad Jibran, candidate member of the Political Bureau and the minister of fish resources, and Dr Muhammad 'Ali Muqbil, the northern part of the homeland's minister of health, have conveyed an oral message to His Highness Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, the sultan of Oman, from the two brothers 'Ali Salim al-Bid, secretary general of the Yemeni Socialist Party Central Committee, and Col 'Ali 'Abdullah Salih, Yemeni Arab Republic president and commander in chief of the Armed Forces, and who is also the secretary general of the General People's Congress of the northern part of the homeland.

The message was conveyed when the sultan received the joint delegation of the two parts of Yemen yesterday afternoon. The message contains an explanation of the unionist steps which were achieved at the historic Aden meeting, as well as what these steps represent in the restoration of the unity of Yemen and its people. It explains that these steps are a factor of security, stability, and cooperation for the benefit of the Yemeni people, and of the countries in the region, by providing a solid unionist foundation on the path to total Arab unity.

For his part, His Highness Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id expressed his satisfaction at the realization of this great achievement, which expresses the Yemeni people's hope and aspirations. He hoped that Yemeni unity would contribute to the security and stability of the region, and that it would bring well-being and prosperity to its people.

PDRY

Council Chairman Reaffirms Unification Call

EA1812132389 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] Brother Dr Yasin Sa'id Nu'man, member of the Political Bureau and Chairman of the Council of Ministers, has emphasized the importance of continuing the steps toward reunification of the two parts of the homeland, based on the principles and goals of the glorious revolutions of 26 September and 14 October. He also stressed the need to safeguard the national gains and achievements which have been realized by the Yemeni people throughout the Yemeni arena. They are the true beneficiary from current and upcoming developments of the united state, which we are aspiring to, he said.

He pointed out that there are great and heavy responsibilities facing the joint ministerial committees of the two parts of the homeland. These call for a speedy execution and follow-up of the work that lies ahead. This work should be conducted within the timetable specified by the authorities in the two parts of the homeland as outlined by the historic Aden agreement of 30 November. Dr Yasin Sa‘id Nu‘man said that the implementation of this very important and urgent work, on which the pillars of the united state are founded, depends on these ministerial committees. They must lay the groundwork for further moves which (?could) be accomplished under the umbrella of Yemeni unity.

The brother prime minister further explained that the joint Yemeni economic committee would shoulder the great burden of working out economic foundations for all sectors of the national economy, including monetary policy, exchange control and customs, as well as the united state's foreign trade. In this respect, he pointed to the efforts exerted by the committee and all the achievements and good work it has carried out in the moves made toward unity since the unity committees started their work in the early seventies.

Brother Dr Yasin Sa‘id Nu‘man was addressing the southern members of the joint Yemeni economic committee at the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Supply this morning. He discussed a number of preparatory issues pertaining to the meeting of the joint Yemeni economic committee which will be convened on Saturday in the historical capital, Sanaa, under the chairmanship of Brothers Dr ‘Abdallah Muhammad ‘Uthman, member of the Central Committee and the minister of industry, trade and supply, and Dr ‘Abd-al-Wahhab Mahmud, minister of finance and trade, and member of the permanent committee in the northern part of the homeland.

Al-‘Attas Interviewed on Unity, Waldegrave Visit

JN1212204889 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 10 Dec 89 p 9

[Interview with Haydar Abu-Bakr al-‘Attas, chairman of the Supreme People's Council Presidium in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, by Mahbub ‘Ali in Aden; date not given]

[Excerpts] AL-ITTIHAD: In light of the approval of the draft permanent constitution for the state of unity at the Aden summit, what steps and measures have you taken to refer it to the Supreme People's Council as stipulated in the Aden unity agreement?

Al-‘Attas: Aden's unity agreement, which was signed on 30 November 1989—the 22d anniversary of national independence in the southern part of the homeland—has placed the issue of Yemeni unity on the historic track that was officially determined by the Cairo agreement of 28 October 1972. This track leads to the restoration of the Yemeni people's unity through peaceful and democratic means. The most important result of the agreement is the draft permanent constitution for the united state, as well as a number of other legislative measures organizing the different political and economic fields. Although the draft constitution was formulated in December 1981, there were many reasons—which do not need to be mentioned—behind freezing it.

Now that the important and historic agreement of the Aden summit has been signed, the issue of Yemeni unity was placed on its historic track according to the Cairo agreement, the Tripoli statement, the Algiers and Kuwait agreements, and the Sanaa and Aden meetings. The masses' momentum was demonstrated by the recent official and popular activities in Yemen. Also, the Yemeni people in both parts of the homeland were very pleased at the achievement of the Aden agreement.

In light of this agreement, the next phase will see important steps, including the referral of the draft constitution to the Supreme People's Council and the Consultative Council in both parts, as stipulated in Paragraph A, Clause No. 2 of the Aden agreement. There are many tasks awaiting the Supreme Yemeni Council, the ministerial committee, and the council's secretariat to lay down all the arrangements and procedural and legal measures to conclude all steps related to the restoration of unity of the two parts of the homeland.

AL-ITTIHAD: As chairman of the Supreme People's Presidium, how long do you think are we going to wait for the declaration of unity between the two Yemeni parts, after the People's Council and the Consultative Council approve the draft constitution?

Al-‘Attas: The Aden agreement, which is based on the agreements signed between the two parts, specified a period of no more than 6 months to discuss, and approve, the constitution by both legislative councils. Both legislative councils are looking forward to the day when they will begin these historic discussions. We believe that the Supreme People's Council in the southern part of the homeland, and its twin in the northern part of the homeland—the Consultative Council—will shoulder their historic responsibility, which will make them submit to our Yemeni people's strong determination to achieve unity. We are not exaggerating when we say that both legislative councils are concerned about the people's determination and understand the masses' worries and emotions, which always give strength and energy to these councils. [passage omitted]

AL-ITTIHAD: After approving the draft constitution of the unity state and electing a unified parliament for the two parts after dissolving the two currently existing legislative councils in both parts, will measures be taken to cancel the applicable laws and substitute them with new ones according to the text of the unity constitution?

Al-‘Attas: In accordance with the text of the draft constitution of the unity state—if my memory does not fail me—Clause No. 134 of the draft stipulates that the laws and resolutions applicable in both parts will remain applicable in each part until amended by other new laws and resolutions in accordance with the rules and measures stipulated in the constitution. This is on condition that these laws and resolutions do not contradict public rights and liberties stipulated by the unity state's draft constitution. In accordance with this, during the transformation stage, the state council will be entrusted with canceling such laws and resolutions in any of the two parts by a decision of its own.

AL-ITTIHAD: However, within the unity state, will you depend on parliamentary government, which allows for party-pluralism, or will you set up the unified political organization authority?

Al-'Attas: Clause No. 39 of the constitution refers to public freedoms: political, professional, unionist, creative, and others for the citizens. The draft constitution of the unity state also stresses the need to guarantee and ensure the citizens' rights to organize themselves politically, professionally, and in unions. At any rate, this subject is being looked into—that is, the future of political activity within the unity state is being looked into. In fact, a recently formed committee held its first round of meetings for the first time, despite the fact that it was stipulated in the Tripoli statement of 1972. This committee is the committee of unified political organization, which the historic Aden agreement entrusted with completeing its tasks in a period not exceeding 2 months. The truth of the matter is that we have great confidence that this committee will perform its noble task. Clause 39 of the draft constitution and other clauses pertaining to public and political freedoms of the Yemeni citizen will be represented in the aspired for united Yemeni state. [passage omitted]

AL-ITTIHAD: Senior military officials from both parts of Yemen are currently holding talks in Sanaa. What is the nature of these discussions, and to what extent will they contribute to the arrangements for merging the armed forces of the two parts?

Al-'Attas: The talks between military commanders from the two military institutions in both parts of the homeland come within the framework of the Aden agreement. Their purpose is to make arrangements and a number of measures to coordinate between the similar institutions in both parts in preparation for the day when unity between the two parts is declared. The meeting of the military commanders in Sanaa inaugurates a major program to be implemented during the coming phase when meetings, contacts, and talks will be held by different official and popular organizations and institutions in the unionist direction.

The brothers in the military institutions have great tasks ahead of them to coordinate and unite their efforts in preparation for the day when the state of the Yemeni unity is born—the day which also will mark the birth of a united Yemeni army.

During that phase, brothers in the military institutions will have to remove the troops of both parts from the borders and direct these forces to training centers with a view to increasing and improving this institution's contribution to the development effort in both parts. The armed forces in the two parts of Yemen have two main tasks: to defend national sovereignty and to contribute, along with the people, to developmental efforts. These will be the same tasks awaiting the united Yemeni army.

AL-ITTIHAD: How do you assess the outcome of the visit made by the minister of state at the British Foreign Office to Aden and its impact on the future of relations between the two countries? And, what can you say about the course of talks between Aden's and Washington's representatives to restore diplomatic ties between the two countries?

Al-'Attas: The results of the visit to our country made by William Waldegrave, minister of state at the British Foreign Office, have shown it is possible to improve cooperation between the two countries on the basis of mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs. Regarding the restoration of diplomatic ties with the United States, the talks currently held in Washington between the two countries' representatives are positive and certainly will bring about good results that will benefit cooperation between the two countries.

Yemen Arab Republic

Joint Committee Meets, Approves Goods Transfer

JN1912191689 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] At the Ministry of Economy, Supply, and Trade, the minutes of the first round of meetings of the economic and financial committee in both parts of the homeland were signed. The committee held its meetings in the capital, Sanaa, during the period 17-19 December. The participants in this round discussed at length a number of issues on its agenda. They adopted numerous resolutions in the fields of agriculture, industry, and transport, in addition to financial and monetary issues.

The formation of many technical committees also was approved to prepare projects, develop the field of economic and social growth, and to set the timetable for the proposed committees to prepare for the coming session. It entrusted a working group of committee members with preparing the traditional report on the activities of the economic committee and its subcommittees. They also were entrusted with unifying laws, lists, and regulations governing the organs and institutions in the two parts.

In the field of economic exchange between the two parts, the committee approved the exemption of the agricultural and industrial products of Yemen from all customs and other taxes and lifting the importation [words indistinct] and any other restrictions.

It then entrusted the chambers of commerce and industry in both parts with the task of issuing a document of origin for manufactured goods other than agricultural produce.

Concerning goods arriving in the free zone in the northern part, the committee agreed that laws applicable in the two parts should be valid. Concerning the balance of payments, the committee entrusted the central banks in both parts and the Yemeni Bank for Construction and Building with the task of opening trade accounts, settling restrictions and bank balances, and calculating interest. It also entrusted the concerned ministers in both parts with dealing with the interest.

The committee issued the following press statement: In accordance with the directives of the leaders of the two parts, the economic committee held its first session of 1989. It reviewed a number of tasks which [words indistinct].

The committee succeeded in issuing a number of practical measures which will be implemented in the coming few days with the aim of removing all the remaining obstacles to the transportation of industrial and agricultural products between the two parts of the Yemen. The committee also discussed a number of future tasks and issues dealing with [words indistinct] unity [words indistinct] entrusting the concerned ministries and organs, especially concerning economic and trade issues, to duplicate their [words indistinct] efforts and to immediately start forming special committees to prepare for the unity draft laws and regulations and their activities so that the draft laws and regulations may be prepared before the unity state is established.

The committee's meetings had a fraternal atmosphere about them inspired by the directives of the two leaderships. This atmosphere enabled the committee to achieve its remaining tasks and to start implementing new ones, thereby preparing for the establishment of the unity state at its appointed time.

It also was decided to hold the coming session in [word indistinct] in Aden with the goal of following up on the implementation of agreements and being briefed on what has been implemented so far.

Tunisian Minister Conveys Message to Salih

JN1912192989 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Brother Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, and secretary general of the General People's Congress, has received a message from President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, president of the fraternal Republic of Tunisia, dealing with the new developments in the Arab arena, bilateral relations, and issues of mutual interest.

The message was conveyed by Brother Moncef Belaid, minister of national economy in the Republic of Tunisia, when received by the brother leader president today. The meeting was attended by Brothers Dr 'Abd-al-Wahhab Mahmud, minister of economy, supply, and trade, and by the Tunisian ambassador to Sanaa.

Issues Statement on Visit

JN1912193589 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Brother Moncef Belaid, Tunisian minister of national economy, arrived in Sanaa today on a visit to our country. During the visit, he will chair the Tunisian side in the joint Yemeni-Tunisian committee meetings to be held in Sanaa between 18 and 21 December.

In a statement to the SABA' news agency, Brother Moncef explained that his visit will provide an opportunity for evaluating and bolstering relations of joint cooperation between the fraternal countries to reach a stage commensurate with the excellent political relations between our country and Tunis. He added that there are many great opportunities available to develop relations between the two countries in the industrial, educational, informational, and teaching fields.

The Tunisian official added that he carries a message to Brother leader Secretary General Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih from his brother, Tunisian President Zine El Abedine Ben Ali, who blesses the unity steps that recently took place between the two parts of the Yemeni homeland.

On hand to receive him were Dr 'Abd-al-Wahhab Mahmud, minister of economy, supply, and trade, and the Tunisian ambassador to Sanaa.

Contacts Held on Release of MIA's, Hostages

Progress Likely Within 'Weeks'

TA1912183189 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Israel has already publicly announced its willingness to move forward with the Iranian Government toward releasing Israeli soldiers and Western hostages. That was the reaction today at the Knesset to an NBC television report last night that Israel has bought Iranian oil for Tehran's help to free those being held. More from reporter David Ze'ev:

Those asked today preferred not to relate directly to the NBC report, but it was noted that on Sunday, just 1 day before the broadcast, the Israeli defense establishment issued its own statement, that navigator Ron Arad is in Iranian hands and that efforts are always continuing to try to secure his release. That message, a source pointed out, was released out in the open, not secretly, and to the world, not just the Iranians.

According to one Knesset member who regularly receives security reports, Sunday's announcement served the purpose of making clear to Tehran that Israel knows Arad and others are in Iranian hands and as a warning not to do anything to any soldiers or hostages that might be regretted later. What's more, the announcement indicates to Iran Israel's willingness to talk and deal.

On the official front today, the Prime Minister's Office and Foreign Ministry does not, as is policy, reveal its sources of oil purchases. Vice Premier Shim'on Peres, following an appearance in Jerusalem today, called the reports inaccurate, but in the Knesset today, we were told to expect progress in 2 or 3 weeks.

Tonight, early in the morning Israel time, NBC broadcast another report on the alleged Israeli-Iranian connection. One senior aide at the Prime Minister's Office had sharp words for the American network, who it will be noted, also reported some months ago on Israeli military advisers involved in the Colombian drug trade.

Bin-Nun on 'Release of Arad'

TA2012052789 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0500 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] Air Force Commander Avihu Bin-Nun says he believes navigator Ron Arad is being held by Iranian forces in Lebanon, probably in the al-Biqa' valley. In an interview with the military weekly BAMAHANE, Bin-Nun said that Arad was handed over by Amal to the Iranians. The commander said that Hizballah leader Shaykh 'Ubayd is one of Israel's main cards in efforts for the release of Arad. Bin-Nun indicated that Israel has received no proof that Arad is still alive.

No Prisoner Swap Seen Soon

TA2012100589 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 20 Dec 89 p 2

[Report by Shmu'el Tal, Yo'el Esteron in Washington, Oren Kohen, and Yosi Werther]

[Excerpts] Senior Jerusalem sources reported yesterday that no prisoner swap deal is expected in the near future, although it is hoped that such an exchange will be carried out sometime in the future. The sources denied reports of a deal involving weapons sales to and oil purchases from Iran in return for assistance regarding the prisoners. [passage omitted]

Yona Baumel, the father of Zekharya Baumel, who has been missing since the battle at al-Sultan Ya'qub, reported yesterday that he had negotiated for the return of the body of Samir As'ad to Israel in exchange for the release of 'Umar al-Qasim, who was held prisoner in Israel but who died later in his cell. The defense establishment had approved the deal, but Nayif Hawatimah, the leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], turned it down. "Once 'Umar al-Qasim understood that he must die as a hero and would never be a free man, he died of his illness," he claimed. "It seemed he died only after receiving a negative response and realizing he could never be a free man again. [no end quotation mark as published]

Baumel added that the defense establishment endorsed the exchange despite the principle of never trading a dead man's body for a living person. He disclosed that the terrorists made the deal conditional upon the termination of deportations of Palestinians from the territories. The deal, however, never came through, even though Baumel traveled to Tunisia twice with the approval of the defense establishment.

The deal apparently fell through because DFLP personnel abroad preferred to allow Al-Qasim die in his cell as a national hero rather than releasing him and letting him die shortly thereafter, but as a free man. He was ultimately buried as a hero with thousands attending his funeral in Jerusalem, turning the day into a Palestinian memorial day.

Al-Qasim, the son of a Jerusalem family, was caught after the 6-Day War as a member of a squad that penetrated Israel to carry out attacks. He was sentenced to life and contracted a fatal kidney disease while in jail. He was considered the DFLP's most senior prisoner held in Israel. When his condition deteriorated, his family tried to obtain his release, thereby starting the negotiating process.

[A similar item in Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew on 20 December by Pe'erli Shahar, Avi Bnayahu, and Pinhas 'Inbari on pages 1 and 6, adds that Baumel said: "We have information that the three MIA's from the al-Sultan Ya'qub battle are alive and are being held by an organization affiliated with Syria." He reported that in January 1989 he was invited to Tunisia, and arrived there via Rome, carrying his American passport. In Tunis, he met with Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, who represented Hawatimah. The report also says that while the DFLP blamed Israel for breaking the deal by expelling DFLP activists more than 6 months ago, "Israeli circles deny this, maintaining that 'Abd-Rabbuh had no authority to execute the deal, because Hawatimah objected to it and because the body of As'ad is probably in Syria."]

Shamir 'Amazed' by Disclosure

TA2012101489 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 20 Dec 89 pp 1, 6

[Report by Pe'erli Shahar, Avi Bnayahu, and Pinhas 'Inbari]

[Excerpt] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir was amazed by the publicity Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin gave to the contacts that have been held with the PLO in Tunisia in a bid to bring about the release of Israeli prisoners. 'AL HAMISHMAR has learned that Shamir also expressed his surprise over the permission granted to the father of the missing soldier Zekharya Baumel to reveal specific details on the process of negotiations with the PLO.

The prime minister told his associates that he did not authorize the announcement and that he would not have acted this way. Furthermore, he said he found it difficult to understand the defense minister's motives in revealing the fact that the Inner Cabinet had sanctioned the contacts. [passage omitted]

Delegation To Include West Bank PLO Members

TA2012101889 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 20 Dec 89 p 3

[Report by Gay Bekhor and Ilan Kfir]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Palestinian figures in the West Bank have said that, although neither the composition nor the size of the Palestinian delegation that will discuss elections in the territories with Israel have been finalized so far, the trend is to form a delegation consisting of representatives from four regions according to organizational affiliation with the PLO. The regions are: Janin and Nabulus, Tulkarm, Ramallah, and Hebron and Bethlehem. Two or three delegates will be elected from each region.

Delay in USSR Visas for Peres' Aides Noted

TA2012102889 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 20 Dec 89 p 13

[Report by Shlomo Naqdimon]

[Text] Vice Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' aides have been stranded in Vienna for the past 3 days, waiting for entry visas to the Soviet Union. Advisers Nimrod Novik and Avi Gil departed on Sunday for Vienna en route to Moscow to prepare for Peres' visit, scheduled for early January 1990. The two had not yet received their entry visas.

Jerusalem sources expressed their belief that the delay is merely technical.

Company Opens Laser Tool Plant in Hungary

TA2012115189 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 20 Dec 89 p 4

[Report by Avraham Dishon]

[Text] The Israeli company MLI Lasers Ltd, which develops and manufactures of high-powered laser tools, has recently set up a plant in Hungary.

The establishment of the plant was kept a tight secret in view of the sensitivity of the issue. This is a high-tech plant, with very few competitors in the world. This is the only one in the Eastern bloc.

The new plant is expected to boost the Eastern European metal and steel industries, including their defense industries, and to serve as a center for industrial services for those countries.

Some of these countries cannot purchase the equipment, whose price range is somewhere around $600,000. That is why they prefer to send metals to Hungary for processing with lasers.

The plant is owned jointly by the Israeli company MLI Lasers Ltd (20 percent), Prof Ayre Lavi from Israel (10 percent), and the giant Hungarian company Tungsram (70 percent). This company has recently been taken over by General Electric.

Dr Tibor Lipani, who heads the plant, is currently visiting Israel. He told me that he believes that the new plant will be highly successful because it is the only one of its kind in the East. Dr Avigdor Shakhnay, the director general of MLI Lasers Ltd, said yesterday that the new plant grants great advantages to the Israeli company and allows it to enter the Eastern bloc market.

'Close Watch' on Iraqi Technology Developments

TA2012102489 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1000 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said in the Knesset that Israel is maintaining a close watch on technological developments in Iraq, especially on medium- and long-range surface-to-surface missiles, on its entry into the space age, and on nonconventional weapons. The minister was answering a query by Knesset member Hanan Porat on the launching of the Iraqi missile. Rabin said we cannot dismiss the technological capability of Iraq or other Arab countries.

Thai Crown Prince Conducts 5-Day State Visit

Arrives 19 Dec

TA1912091389 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0900 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] The Thai crown prince arrived in Israel this morning on a 5-day state visit. The prince's plane was escorted by Israel Air Force jet fighters in a salute flight.

Discusses Direct Flights With Shamir

TA1912183689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1800 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir met at his residence with the visiting crown prince of Thailand this afternoon. Our political correspondent Arye Golan reports that in a talk with the visitor, the prime minister raised the possibility of direct El Al flights from Israel to Thailand. He also noted that cooperation between the two countries on subjects of mutual interest, such as agriculture and irrigation, must be enhanced.

Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that tomorrow Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn will be the guest of the Defense Ministry, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], and the defense establishment. He will meet with Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and tour the defense industries, as well as army and Air Force bases.

Government To Try Group for Colombian Connection

TA2012074889 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 20 December 89 p 1

[Report by Andy Goldberg]

[Excerpt] The State Attorney's Office has decided to prosecute a number of employees of the Hod Hahanit defence consultancy company on suspicion of providing military training to Colombian drug traffickers. It is not clear, however, whether they will be indicted for exporting military know-how without a licence, or on lesser charges.

Hod Hahanit's president, Tat Aluf [Brigadier General; as published] Ya'ir Klein, maintained last night that he had not committed any crime and that any charges filed against him would soon be dismissed in court.

Klein's lawyer, Yig'al Shapira, stated that prosecution "was a possibility," but added that he was confident that his clients had a good chance of winning any trial.

"Even if worst comes to worst and we lose, we're not speaking of a serious crime and all the judge can mete out is a suspended one month's sentence and a fine of NIS [new Israeli shekels] 500 or NIS 1,000. I am not worried."

It was also reported yesterday that the three U.S. officials investigating possible Israeli connections to the Colombian drug cartels are expected to wind up their mission here this week. The officials, all assistants to senators, have been asked to interview senior police officers, officials at the Defence Ministry, the Foreign Ministry, and the State Attorney's Office, and former army officers connected with Hod Hahanit.

Shapira said the visit of the U.S. investigators had "awakened" the State Attorney's Office people. "They had let the file lie for months, but the time has come to decide one way or the other," Shapira said. He did not think the State Attorney's Office was reacting to any American pressure, but rather that the visit had refocused attention on the case.

Shapira advised Klein not to travel to the U.S. to testify before a Senate subcommittee after administration officials refused to give assurances that Klein would not be arrested. [passage omitted]

November Consumer Price Index Up 1.3 Percent

TA1512125189 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1200 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Excerpt] The November consumer price index rose by 1.3 percent. The annual rate of inflation now stands at just over 20 percent. The monthly cost of living for an average family is now 3,030 shekels, an increase of 40 shekels compared with October. [passage omitted]

IDF Applying New Curfew 'Concept' in Gaza Strip

TA1912174389 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Report by military affairs correspondent 'Amos Har'el]

[Text] A slight increase in the number of disturbances, mainly involving stoning incidents, has been registered in the Gaza Strip over the past few days. It is difficult to pinpoint the cause of this flare-up, but a link to the second anniversary of the uprising is suggested. However, what is clear, according to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], is that the Gaza Strip is a powder keg, a place where the locals react swiftly to events. Thus, the call to express solidarity with the Black Panther group was heeded in the Gaza Strip, of all places. As a result, a strike was observed there and local disturbances occurred, while Janin remained quiet.

The past week, at any rate, had been preceded by a rather long period of relative quiet. Not even a single Arab death was recorded in the Gaza Strip in November, while there were three such cases in December. Two were murdered on suspicion of collaboration with Israel, whereas the average monthly murder toll stands at 10.

The IDF says that its explicit goal is to lower the number of casualties. The area is known for its speedy reaction to incidents, particularly those in which children are hurt. In parallel, the concept now is that long periods of curfew are pointless. Therefore, the average number of curfew days dropped in October to one-eighth of what was considered the norm in May, the peak period. It is being said that the instructions the troops have been given is to employ all means, but only after careful thought; and to make sure to avoid situations in which there is fear for soldiers' lives, as these incidents can easily lead to a flare-up.

The perpetrators of the attack in November at al-Shaykh 'Ajlin, in which two soldiers were killed, have not yet been caught, although large caches of weapons have been found since then. The IDF feels that the next attack involving firearms could be just around the corner. There have always been armed wanted men in the Gaza Strip, they note.

Five months after the beginning of the campaign of issuing the magnetic entry permits, it can actually be termed a success. Some 100,000 cards have been issued, and an additional 2,000 applications have been rejected. Originally, the defense establishment thought only 70,000 cards would be distributed.

Also, the local committees apparently have given up the fight against the cards. One leaflet of the Unified National Command of the Intifadah actually says so explicitly.

The IDF has been complaining about the UN Relief and Works Agency's [UNRWA] operations, claiming that it is overstepping its mandate. The number of UNRWA employees in the Gaza Strip is currently three times higher than its payroll at the outset of the uprising. Some of them routinely engage in surveillance of army operations. Vehicles bearing plates identifying them as belonging to the UN observer units on the Golan Heights have even been spotted in Gaza. The IDF finds it difficult to accept the excuse that these vehicles got lost on the way.

A rise in the power of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, has been felt in Gaza for several months now. Efforts are being made to coordinate moves between fundamentalist Muslims and the PLO, although to date without substantial success. The IDF believes that even with the current troop deployment it is possible to maintain a relatively low level of violence, as was evidenced in the past few months; yet the friction—it is emphasized in the same breath—is constant. Each day that passes without casualties in the Gaza Strip should be viewed as a success.

Intifadah Leaders Bid To Win Public Opinion

TA2012095789 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0505 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] Faysal al-Husayni and Ghassan al-Khatib, two of the Palestinian leaders in the territories, say that they are currently conducting an information campaign aimed at winning Jewish public opinion in Israel over to their struggle. They made the remarks at a symposium in Shefar'am. Yo'el Dar reports:

The intifadah has many aspects which find expression not only in the stonings of security forces and the hurling of firebombs at vehicles, but also in an attempt to capture public opinion in Israel and the outside world. This was understood from Faysal al-Husayni's remarks to a symposium in the village of Shefar'am. The man, who officially is director of the East Jerusalem Institute of Arab Studies, said that in its 1st year the intifadah managed to co-opt public opinion in Europe, in the 2d made partial successes in the United States, and now with the outbreak of the 3d year the struggle is centered on winning over Israeli public opinion because it is ripe for many changes.

The speaker divided Israeli society into those who aspire to finding a political solution and those who oppose it. In such a situation, he said, the peaceful forces should continue their struggle. He went on to say that despite the opposition displayed by right-wing elements and acts of repression, the intifadah is succeeding in creating changes in Israeli society.

Dr Ghassan al-Khatib, a lecturer at Bi'r Zayt University, said Israeli Arabs have a role to play in achieving this target. The lecturer said: We are also conducting an information campaign among the Jewish population, and circumstances permit our Palestinian brothers living in Israel to do this better than we can. Through their contacts with Israel they therefore have a role to play in this struggle.

Referring to psychological warfare, Faysal al-Husayni justified the cruel murders of those called collaborators. He believes the murdered people helped the army identify intifadah activists and made it easier for the security authorities to get rid of the activists. The intifadah is not out to get Palestinians, but it is making life more difficult for collaborators and harder for the security forces to get to those struggling against them. Al-Husayni does not, however, rule out that there have been mistakes in identifying those considered collaborators.

Number of Palestinian Fatalities Updated

TA2012103689 Tel Aviv HA'OLAM HAZE in Hebrew 20 Dec 89 p 6

[Report by Orit Zrubavel]

[Text] On Monday, 18 December, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman reported 541 Palestinian fatalities in the occupied territories. The figure includes only those killed by soldiers' gunfire.

According to HA'OLAM HAZE's figures, the number of Palestinian fatalities is 685.

The Palestinian Information Center for Human Rights, on the other hand, reports 830 fatalities, according to the following breakdown: —603 fatalities from IDF soldiers' and settlers' gunfire;
—57 fatalities from asphyxiation;
—82 fatalities from beatings and electrocution;

—88 fatalities from other causes.

AL-SHA'B Editorial on 2d Anniversary of Uprising

TA0812164789 Jerusalem AL-SHA'B in Arabic 8 Dec 89 p 1

[Editorial: "A 3d Year—Intifadah"]

[Text] Tomorrow the intifadah will bid farewell to its 2d year, and will stand on the threshold of a new year amid a series of rapid developments and changes, all indicating that the coming days will be filled with extremely important developments. These developments will be decisive for finding a peaceful, comprehensive, and durable settlement in the region, a settlement based on resolutions endorsing international legitimacy. These should constitute the firm basis for any solution to a crisis that has lasted too long and whose dangers have increased. This is especially true since the international climate for such a solution has never been so favorable as it is now. This is a time when the two superpowers are trying tirelessly to extinguish hotbeds of tension and establish international security and peace instead of wars and disasters, which have proved their failure in achieving safety, stability, and security for mankind.

There is no doubt that the Palestinian and Arab diplomatic effort in the international arena has been able to exploit the successes of the intifadah during the past 2 years of its life and to gain achievements that could not have been achieved without the intifadah. The intifadah enabled the Arabs to present the world with a new nation that is worthy of respect and appreciation and that is looking for justice and the realization of legitimate rights. This is something that has driven Israel's leaders into a corner.

If the Palestinian and Arab diplomatic effort has so far been able to make considerable strides in the international arena toward coopting international public opinion to the side of Palestinian and Arab rights, what is required today is to accelerate this effort and hasten its steps at a higher tempo so that it will be able to effect the required change in the U.S. position. This position is still a hostage in the hands of Israel's leaders, who do not want it to move in any direction that will achieve a settlement responding to the resolutions that support international legitimacy and endorse the principle of land for peace.

If today the intifadah is bidding farewell to another year of its life and is welcoming a new year, while being more capable than ever to develop itself and consolidate its status in the international arena and in the hearts and minds of all peace-loving people in the world, what is expected of the international community is for it to increase its efforts to enable the Palestinian people to gain their rights. The past 2 years have not only proved that neither repression, deportations, the closure of schools, nor the demolition of homes can undermine the resolve of a nation which believes in its right, but that such practices only prolong enmity and increase pain.

Newspaper Expresses Fear Over Tripartite Talks

TA0812161689 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 8 Dec 89 pp 1, 11

[Editorial: "The Egyptian Response... Will it Be of Any Use?"]

[Text] Yesterday the U.S. State Department announced that Egypt had accepted Baker's five points as a framework for advancing the peace process. Secretary of State James Baker had proposed his points with the intention of launching a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. This acceptance opens the way toward convening a meeting in Washington at the beginning of next month between the U.S. secretary of state and the Egyptian and Israeli foreign ministers. We would have liked to feel, however, that this represents progress toward the desired solution of the Palestinian problem.

Washington had considered the Israeli response to Baker's points as positive despite a series of attached Israeli assumptions and reservations. It has become clear that the Egyptian response as well was not devoid of reservations.

If Washington considers the Israeli and Egyptian responses a step forward on the road to reaching understanding, what kind of understanding is this? Is it only for entering a dialogue with conditions for holding elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip according to Shamir's proposed plan?

The Palestinian people yearn for the achievement of peace more than any other people in this world after having been burned by the fire of wars and after having sacrificed everything that is valuable and priceless in order to achieve peace, but not any peace! From the beginning of this century, every time that talks have been held about the Palestinian problem, the Palestinians have been excluded. This time, however, our people have chosen the hard way and will not accept any solution that does not include recognition of their legitimate rights to self-determination over the soil of their homeland.

The experience of the dialogue with the United States in Tunis over a period exceeding 1 year has been harsh. Nothing worthwhile has been achieved. On the contrary, the United States is using the dialogue as a means of pressuring the Palestinians in a bid to obtain one concession after another from them. What we fear is that the meeting between the U.S. secretary of state and the Egyptian and Israeli foreign ministers in Washington next month, in the absence of the Palestinian side, will not bring about any positive results for us. We also fear that it will be a waste of time and that we will lose another month waiting for this meeting, to be followed by another date to wait for. Procrastination and delay do not serve the cause of peace or the Palestinian people's aspirations.

Our Palestinian people have undoubtedly shown exceptional firmness in the face of hurricanes. They have neither weakened nor despaired, but the continuation of the status quo contributes to destroying the Palestinian people's economic, educational, and cultural institutions. All the liquidation plans in the political arena today seek only to circumvent the intifadah and end the role of our people in their struggle to achieve their personality and entity.

On the basis of Baker's five points, it is assumed that after the meeting in Washington a dialogue will take place in Cairo between an Israeli and a Palestinian delegation, provided that Israel agrees on the members of the Palestinian delegation. Assuming that the Palestinians accept this condition, the agenda for discussion is the elections and the negotiating process as determined by the Israeli initiative!

Hence, what the Palestinian people are required to do is to "kneel down." All this, and our Arab nation is not paying attention to our cause and people except through various publicity media. The Arab nation is preoccupied with other issues, as if it has expiated its responsibilities by recognizing the Palestinian state on paper and washed its hands of our cause.

The coming days are fateful and historic. History will not forgive our Arab nation this neglect and degradation!

Correspondent Urges Caution on Egyptian Response

TA0712124689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1105 GMT 7 Dec 89

[Report by Arab affairs correspondent Aharon Barne'a]

[Text] There is still no Egyptian response to our acceptance of their reply. Several things need be clarified and put in the proper perspective, however, and perhaps we should not be too happy too soon.

Yesterday, when it was publicized that Egypt had conveyed its reply to the United States, sources in Cairo made an effort to clarify that in fact there is no difference between the Egyptian and the PLO stands. One exists merely in the wording of the positions. This is not to say that there are no disagreements between the position held by President Mubarak and his advisers and the PLO leadership in Tunis. Two of these advisers deserve special attention because it is they who coordinate contacts with both the United States and the PLO: Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Majid, and Dr Usamah al-Baz, President Mubarak's adviser for political affairs.

It should be clear, however, that neither the PLO nor Egypt have changed their positions. The Egyptians made it clear from the very beginning—when Baker's five points were first published—that the final decision on the whole process will come from the PLO, and that Egypt will not speak for the Palestinians. The Egyptians promised the United States that they will not serve as a mailman. They promised the Palestinians that they would not make decisions for them, as stated by President Mubarak himself.

It seems that what happened here—what makes the leaders of both the United States and Israel see the Egyptian reply as positive—was that they adopted the technique employed by Israel in its reply. Egypt is following the model set for it by Israel: They accept the plan, they accept its five points, but they ask for guarantees. Israel demanded that guarantees be given, now Egypt is asking the same. The guarantees presented by Egypt are, in fact, the PLO guarantees, which seems to be very well-known. It makes no difference how we term it, but this is the state of affairs.

As far as political contacts are concerned, another issue deserves attention as well. The positive Egyptian reply, or rather what is termed in Washington and now in Jerusalem as such, was given only after John Kelly's visit to Cairo 2 days ago. Several hours after Kelly left, Yasir 'Arafat landed in Cairo en route from Abu Dhabi to Tunis. Usamah al-Baz went there and briefed him on the meeting and agreement reached with Kelly. Only after this conversation was held did Egypt make its reply to the United States public. It should be taken into consideration that Mr 'Arafat is probably knowledgeable about this answer as well.

Badran Delivers Government Policy Statement

JN1912112489 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 0813 GMT 19 Dec 89

["Government policy statement" delivered by Prime Minister Mudar Badran in parliament on 19 December—live]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Your Excellency the Speaker, honorable representatives: God's blessings be upon you. In my name and on behalf of the ministers in the government, which His Majesty King Husayn, God preserve him, asked me to form, I salute your honorable House, and I congratulate every one of you for winning the confidence of the people in free elections in an atmosphere of integrity and neutrality, which was witnessed by people far and near. I present my government's policy statement, beseeching Almighty God to make this meeting of parliament a meeting of good and continuous work for the sake of our dear Jordan as it resumes its democratic march, opens all its windows to freedom, and accepts the challenges imposed by the new phase, which requires awareness, knowledge, and work so its image can become a distinguished example representing the will of its unique Hashemite leadership and the pride of its great people.

I and my government have the honor to extend to his beloved majesty the king our deepest thanks and sincerest loyalty for granting us his confidence, beseeching Almighty God to preserve his majesty, grant him success in his efforts, realize dignity for the homeland, strength for the people, and unity for the nation under his leadership, and grant us the ability to bear the trust he has assigned us.

As it presents its policy statement, my government stresses its full eagerness to continue cooperation with your honorable House—cooperation arising from the government's deep sense of the burdens of responsibility toward the new phase, which requires consultation, exchange of views, and positive interaction between the executive and legislative authorities in the interest of the Jordanian people, who have expressed their excellent ability to confront the dangers and who have drawn up a plan, through their course, for a strong national unity that enables them to shoulder their historic responsibilities in loyalty to their pan-Arab affiliation and the message of their Islamic nation.

Honorable representatives, the government stresses its commitment to his majesty the king's instructions, which were contained in his royal letter of designation and the speech from the throne, which opened this session of parliament. Your honorable House's accurate reply to it, its awareness of the facts and potentials, and its understanding of the dimensions of the new phase in terms of ideology, politics, economy, society, education, construction, and information constitute the general framework of the statement, which we present to your honorable House. The government called for these factors in a neutral, objective, and realistic spirit. It also hopes this statement will be an honest response to all this and will be viewed as a program for the coming phase and a guideline for the government's action within the framework of the democratic trend of the dear Jordanian society in a climate of tolerance, popular participation, constructive dialogue, and deep sense of responsibility.

Upon directives from His Majesty King Husayn, the government has announced before your honorable House the availability of the political will to abolish martial law regulations and eliminate their effects, which still are felt today. The government thus began its measures by returning seized passports to their owners and guaranteeing the freedom of work, travel, and movement of the citizens. It also has released political prisoners, restored the elected boards of directors of the three Jordanian newspapers, and abolished the decision under which the Jordanian Writers' Association was dissolved. A study is being made of the legal and economic effects which resulted from the application of these regulations for too long so we can deal with this issue in a correct, legal manner, guaranteeing the preservation of rights and the right course of action. I announce from this esteemed House the freezing of martial law regulations, except in matters related to liquidating the effects of these regulations and until they are abolished constitutionally as soon as possible.

In taking these steps, the government affirms its eagerness to respect the Constitution and abide by its letter and spirit. The government believes constitutional progress is reflected in the extent of the maturity of public opinion and in the citizens' defense of man's essential rights to freedom, study, and work. This is in addition to the citizen's concern for the security of his country, acceptance of other opinions in an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance, and the extent of his opposition to the manifestations of corruption and to any attempt to infringe on the liberties of others, in addition to his right to express this opinion in thought, word, and deed.

My government also views the principle of consultation and democracy as the best formula to demonstrate the results of the citizen's interaction with his cultural experience, based on freedom, human dignity, and equality. No one who abides by these basic principles should be afraid to state his opinion or express his dissatisfaction.

The government is determined to strengthen these principles in all spheres of life. It believes freedom and authority are not contradictory, but complementary. There is no freedom without order. Freedom to authority is like spirit to body; neither can exist without the other. This determination will extend to freeing public liberties, including equality before the law and the judiciary, assuming public offices, having equal opprtunities, and the citizen's right to freedom of belief, security, study, work, housing, movement, and his right to form communities and organizations, express his beliefs freely through his press, and to not be harmed because of his ideological beliefs. When this is realized, all his creative energies will be released. He will become a defender of human rights and people's honor everywhere in the spirit of the group eager to work and serve.

In line with the directives of His Majesty King Husayn to formulate a national charter, the government will take required measures to implement this noble duty in cooperation with your honorable House. The national charter is based on the constitutional provisions and the constant principles of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. It aims at entrenching the basic national and pan-Arab concepts to be followed by the government, and on which the political organizations will be established.

Honorable representatives, the government expresses pride in the role the Jordanian Armed Forces are playing in defending and protecting the homeland. The government will work to bolster the Armed Forces so it can continue defending our land and the factors of our existence against aggression. The government will work to provide the Armed Forces with the backing, care, and training they deserve, and to supply them with the sophisticated weapons and equipment they require to continue performing their sacred duty of defending the longest line of confrontation with the Zionist enemy. By taking such a great position, the Armed Forces prove to be a shield that will defend our country against the racist Zionist invasion and settlement threats.

Jordan has decided to devote the Armed Forces to this great duty in response to its historic role, which goes back to the battles of Mu'tah, al-Yarmuk, and al-Karamah. Their dear name, "The Arab Legion," continues to convey this noble message. The government will continue to provide security and stability for citizens of the homeland's cities, villages, and desert to protect our solid internal front and preserve its cohesion. Proceeding from this principle, it will support the security organs to shoulder these responsibilities. It will provide stability, achieve supremacy of law and order, reassure citizens about their safety, protect their lives and properties, and make sure security men everywhere will eagerly, honestly, and with full awareness, safeguard the country's security and protect the democratic experience, which we practice with discipline, understanding, and honesty without any concession that may open a loophole in our course or allow the enemies to infiltrate our ranks.

Honorable representatives, the government is determined to entrench the rule of resorting only to the civil courts and to take measures guaranteeing the quick and effective performance of the courts' duties. This will be done as the government stresses its concern about the independence, inviolability, and honor of the judiciary to improve its work and guarantee the citizen's right to live in safety under the supremacy of justice and the law, in line with the political decision to cancel martial law and the emergency courts. The government also will work to establish a constitutional court and amend legislation to achieve that goal. It also will work to cancel the legal provisions preventing the judiciary from contesting administrative decisions.

In the education field, the government will work to implement a plan promoting education, raising the level of teaching, linking it to the society's needs, guaranteeing a sound national education based on our Arab and Islamic faith and culture, and deepening educational and behavioral aspects of our youth. This plan covers the creation of new curricula for secondary school education, developing school books for elementary and secondary courses, and allowing teachers with community college diplomas to earn university degrees. The government also will work to expand vocational education and training in the secondary course and to provide a large number of existing schools with basic facilities and equipment.

The government also will strive to develop education programs on pre-school learning, educational administration, examination systems, and combating illiteracy.

As for higher education, the government will work to improve community colleges, enabling them to meet the demands of the national educational plans, as well as the society's demands. The government also will work to expand fairly opportunities for university education, to support Jordanian universities, take measures ensuring their independence, form a board of trustees for each university, ensure secure funding for them, expand postgraduate studies programs, encourage theoretical and applied scientific research, and positively consider launching excellent private sector universities.

Because the government views teaching as a mission and calling, it will work to support the educational staff working at various learning stages to promote their academic standing and improve their work standards.

As for the cultural field, the government will seek to pay due attention to the intellectual and art movements in an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance, aiming to highlight Jordan's role in the march of Arab and Islamic civilization and to inform others of this civilization. The government also will work to support publishing, translation, and distribution activities. It will encourage and protect writers, authors, and artists. It will encourage writing as a career and continue granting the state's special achievement and encouragement awards. The government moreover will encourage development in the theatrical and visual art movements. It also will strive to foster those with promising talents, attach special importance to children's education, and review existing laws and regulations to ensure the cultural movement is bolstered and the bill on copyright and patency is finalized. It also will work to launch a national library and help public libraries in cities, villages, and bedouin areas perform their tasks.

The government also will continue supporting the cultural and art bodies and associations, particularly considering the Jordanian Writers' Association has resumed its normal activities, thus allowing Jordanian writers to unify their ranks on democratic bases. The government moreover will attach special importance to coordination among official sectors and institutions related to the cultural endeavor.

In the field of youth affairs, the government will work to care for youth based on principles emanating from our creed and our nation's experience. The government besides will work to educate them in the spiritual, intellectual, psychological, physical, and social domains. It will endeavor to foster their talents and encourage their interaction with positive youth experiences on the Arab, Islamic, and international levels. The government will emphasize invigorating sports unions, backing sporting activities, and establishing youth organizations with programs aimed at pushing youth and sports endeavors toward further positive action. The objective also is to make youth more aware of the real dimensions of freedom, of expressing one's opinion, and of the importance of exchanging opinions and acting in accordance with team spirit. Besides, the government will back sports clubs and youth centers. It will also help improve the status of sports installations. Furthermore, the government will strive to study the issue of youth voluntary work camps, as these work camps have a role in consecrating the sense of belonging, the spirit of citizenship, and respect for work. This will be done through cooperation among the institutions related to caring for youth, educating them, and teaching them. Furthermore, the government will strive to enhance ties with our youth who are learning or working abroad.

As for awqaf and Islamic calling affairs, the government is determined to bring about a qualitative leap in the training and qualification of preachers and imams to meet demands and replenish existing and expected shortages through a gradual increase in the building of mosques and Islamic centers, and also through launching further awqaf projects requiring excellent efficiency, befitting our true Islamic religion so that shari'a schools and a preachers' college can be established to educate preachers. The preachers' college is meant to be built on a centrist intellectual basis embracing centrist conceptions, ideas, and means of preaching, beginning with the ideas cherishing wisdom and the pursuit of agreeable methods of persuasion and ending with the exhortation that preachers must argue with people in the most agreeable manner. The government will strive to establish some of these institutes near the tombs of the companions of the prophet to enhance the spiritual ties linking every Jordanian to the heroes of the Islamic conquest in implementation of the king's desire to promote these tombs to immortalize the companions' memory and emphasize their role in building the civilizational edifices of the nation.

Moreover, the government will endeavor to upgrade the work of the Zakat [Islamic alms] Fund to pave the way for generalizing the zakat collection, so it can contribute toward the launching of productive projects designed to provide jobs for the poor and unemployed. The government besides will seek to enhance the pilgrimage process to ensure the best services are rendered to pilgrims at the least possible cost, and to safeguard the dignity of pilgrims and ensure them a privileged status among other pilgrims. The government also will seek to reconsider the law on preaching and guidance and the regulations issued in accordance with this law to safeguard the preachers's dignity and their freedom in discussing religious issues, as well as issues about earthly life.

Honorable representatives: As for the information field, the government will strive to review the dimensions of information, aiming to improve the performance of informational policy and push it toward a higher degree of realism and honesty, so it can be a real expression of far-reaching transformations currently under way in Jordanian society. The objective here also is enabling the informational policy to cope with the new phase best manifested by our democratic policies. The government endeavors to accentuate the role of the news media in highlighting Jordan's civilizational march; that is, in highlighting its intellectual, cultural, educational, and artistic dimensions within a framework of openness and freedom of expression allowing for dialogue. This role dictates national media expertise be utilized and that the informational message be conveyed to all strata of citizens. The government affirms the news media's cultural role in bolstering the educational process and in supporting the steadfastness of our people in Palestine, who are expressing through their blessed intifadah the spirit of the Islamic Arab nation, which is holding out in the face of the Zionist invasion.

The role of the news media will be to identify with the Jordanian experience and strive to deeply reflect its proportions, displaying seriousness, freedom, and a sense of responsibility, away from the artificial trivialization of opinions. The news media will be responsive to the spirit of their Islamic and Arab message and will delve into everything new in the human experience. That is because its role in diffusing awareness, culture, and knowledge is to be based on Jordan's civilizational message.

The government will work to reconsider the law on press and publications and to regulate the informational process in a manner displaying interaction, cohesion, and solidarity with the aim of producing a society of producers, rather than one of consumerists devoted to luxury spending. The government moreover will aim to formulate a policy ensuring the media organs will give the people that which produces a useful education in harmony with the nation's creed, code of ethics, and its Arab and Islamic values.

Honorable representatives, since the government administration is the major tool implementing government projects, it will concentrate on an integrated program for administrative development to facilitate official procedures, restructure organs to meet the demands of the society with sufficiency and ability, rehabilitate and train the civil servant, preserve public funds, strictly and effectively eliminate lax administration and financial corruption, and set up an organ for supervision and administrative inspection side by side with an organ for financial inspection. The government will submit special legislation to your honorable House to combat economic crime, aiming to eradicate this dangerous plague from our society. The government also will submit other legislation to the House as soon as possible to regulate the work of commission agents and middlemen, which will place restraints on this important sector, define responsibilities, and protect the citizens from exploitation.

The government is fully aware of the great harm caused by financial corruption to the structure of a society, in addition to the great deterioration its spread can cause. To check the spread of this phenomenon, and proceeding from this concept, the government will cooperate with your council to reveal the various facades of financial corruption and purge our beloved country of its effects and repercussions. It will not allow or tolerate any corruption or laxity. It will strike forcefully at any arm reaching for public funds. Every corrupt or corrupting person will get the legal punishment he deserves.

Out of government concern for public funds, and in an attempt to protect society from encroachment on the law and to define responsibility, the government will present your honorable House with legislation obliging all those holding high political and administrative position to present a comprehensive and documented report to a certain authority to be named by the law on all their possessions, and those of their wives and children, including real estate and liquid property, as well as any change in these possessions during their term in office. This report will become the reference document should any query about a particular official arise.

In the services sector, the government will seek to secure the citizens' basic services according to a detailed program and within the state's financial limitations.

In the field of health, the government will strive to expand its curative and preventive health services, evaluate its trial in this field, and control the expenses of health care. It will strive to control the price of medicine, providing the necessary medicine and setting up a parallel market with this in mind. It will increase health awareness among the citizenry. It also will work toward expanding the umbrella of health insurance, to be followed gradually by building hospitals, modernizing the already existing ones, and setting up health centers according to citizens' needs. The government will pay special attention to expanding the family planning program and subsidizing the child and maternity centers with the national vaccination program.

The government also will conentrate on protecting the environment from pollution, setting the relevant and necessary legislation, and reviewing the existing systems to guarantee the sound realization and quick implementation of environmental protection measures to guarantee citizens' safety and encourage them to participate in protecting their environment.

In the field of social security, the government will draw up a comprehensive policy to deal with unemployment and pockets of poverty to increase labor opportunities in all the Kingdom's regions through organizing the labor market, establishing employment offices, increasing capital expenditure, encouraging the private sector's investments in mechanized projects, and providing more opportunities for rehabilitation, training, and necessary funds from the development and employment fund to establish small projects based on justice and balance among the kingdom's various regions and society's factions.

The government will protect workers' rights based on justice and joint responsibility with employers. It also will reinforce the cooperative movement, encourage unions, take special care of charity areas, eradicate social problems, and provide handicapped and disabled care through direct support and social security. The government also will encourage and support voluntary work organizations and societies, enabling them to shoulder their social responsibilities in harmony with the current phase's requirements.

In the field of agriculture, the government will endeavor to organize agricultural production, reduce dependence on agricultural imports, encourage production of local crops produced in considerable amounts, and to focus on production of strategic commodities, such as wheat, fodder, and red meat.

The government will continue to unify the sources of agricultural loans—being part of the basic solution to the framers' credits—through rescheduling of loans, especially those of small farmers. Within its efforts to reform agricultural institutions, the government will review its role to avoid duplicating duties, to unify development, and save money. Agricultural legislation will be revised to cope with changes in production relations, facilitate the use of government land in national investment projects, and to encourage establishing productive cooperatives. The government also will rectify the marketing operation and the production system to block exploitation, monopoly and subsequent harm to farmers and consumers. This also will facilitate marketing of agricultural products and opening new markets.

To secure public participation in development, the government will set up a general federation for farmers that will include specialized quality federations. The government also will develop agricultural patterns to prepare graduates from agricultural schools to qualify for modern agricultural requirements. The government will strive to provide the needs of production and price control, secure fodder, provide veterinary services, and implement a national afforestation program. The government also asserts its high interest in developing the eastern and southern regions and the Jordanian desert by setting up productive agricultural projects in them based on their economic and social feasibility.

In the supply field, the government will continue providing all foodstuffs and to curb monopoly and exploitation in all aspects and manifestations. It also will tighten control on basic food prices and ensure all foodstuffs are of good quality and meet set standards and specifications. The government stresses it is very interested in enhancing the role of parallel markets so every family can afford the new economic stage. The government will encourage establishing consumer protection societies to help the citizen protect his family and society.

In the field of water, the government will give utmost priority to our water resources by laying down a comprehensive strategy to exploit underground water, develop exploitation of surface water by erecting dams and completing the al-Wahdah dam, search for new resources, and reuse the affluent of water treatment plants for restricted agriculture. The government will encourage optimal use of water and gurantee its fair distribution to all regions and sectors.

In the field of transport and communications, the government will continue organizing passenger and cargo land transportation, follow implementation of bilateral and collective agreements with a number of fraternal Arab countries, and sign new agreements with a view to integrating efforts and consolidating the capabilities of the land transport sector. The government will take the necessary measures to revise the structure of this sector in order to upgrade some of its establishments. The government will focus on the conditions of our national carrier—Royal Jordanian—from all angles to ensure development of its financial and administrative status and performance of its work economically and in the best, useful way possible. The government also will implement the financial and administrative development project of the Telecommunications Corporation to make best use of the integrated infrastructure it established.

In the field of public works and housing, the government will act toward completing the main road network, the establishment of which already has started, and maintenance of existing roads. The government also will expand rural and agricultural roads to cope with the needs of local societies. The government will reconsider the policy of housing and urban development to provide suitable housing for workers, civil servants, and people with low income, according to their needs and capabilities. The government also will work at treating the problems of the construction sector, and will tackle the trouble and slowness in executing some projects.

In the field of local administration and regional development, the government will support municipal and rural councils, develop the concept of local administration, revise related legislation to entrench democratic practice, contain administrative decentralization, activate councils of regional development, promote local services provided to citizens, and complete provision of water, electricity, telephone and post services, paved roads, and necessary government buildings to rural and desert areas.

In the field of energy and mineral resources, the government will continue exploring for oil and gas after discovering promising amounts of gas in al-Rishah. The government will study the best methods of exploiting this gas to generate electricity and to use it in industry, particularly the petrochemical industry. The government also will give special attention to developing alternative energy sources. This includes possibily using oil shale, solar and wind energy. The government also will give attention to electricity; it will continue providing a high level of electricity now that electricity service covers 97 percent of the Kingdom. The government also will continue operating electricity linkage with Arab countries according to economic feasibility. The government also will give special attention to mineral resources, aiming to increase exports of minerals and their derivatives, especially phosphate, potash, fertilizers, and cement, and to expand exploitation and manufacturing of other mineral raw materials after conducting accurate feasibility studies.

In the field of tourism and antiquities, the government will encourage internal and external tourism by changing tourist services in terms of simplification, promotion, marketing, organization, and training through cooperation with the private sector. The government will look after all archaeological, religious, and natural sites through cooperation with international organizations and scientific missions from both Jordanian and foreign universities. The government also will stress the role of tourism as a cultural and media process, in addition to tourism's obvious role in economic development oriented toward establishing an Arab tourist region.

Esteemed deputies: You know during the past 5 years the Kingdom has experienced a slowdown in growth rates and a recession in the volume of investment. That has been accompanied by a high population growth rate. This led to a drop in the living standard and per capita income. During that period, the government borrowed more domestic and foreign money to increase expenditure. This led to accumulation of a deficit in the state budget, depletion of the Kingdom's foreign currency reserves, an increase in debts, and to a domestic and foreign economic imbalance. This resulted in an acute financial crisis, which led to the floating of the dinar in 1988. This also led to cessation of repaying foreign debts and to an increase in unemployment rates and pockets of poverty. The relative economic slowdown that hit the region was accompanied by a decline in demand for Jordanian commodities and services, as well as a decline in foreign aid, thus exacerbating this crisis. From its inauguration, the former government worked to contain the financial crisis and to deal with its repercussions. It began to implement an economic reform program and ease the burden of foreign debt by rescheduling a part of the foreign loans and intensifying efforts to increase Arab aid. This program is a national integrated program for years to come. It requires all efforts be combined to render it successful. This government will work to promote this program until it becomes a comprehensive national economic program to achieve more investment opportunities, encourage exportation, create many jobs, and raise the standard of living. At the same time, the government will make sure self-reliance gradually is enhanced and that the private sector's role is activated.

While presenting the major points of this program, the government hopes its implementation will help overcome our current economic crisis. These points are:

1. To increase national reserves and curb consumption, especially consumption of luxury items, through financial and monetary policies, not through administrative measures. The government is determined to begin with itself in changing the public sector's expenditure and consumption habits.

2. To increase investment rates and direct investment toward developing Jordanian raw materials and agriculture, with special attention to small and medium projects implemented by the private sector, as well as to exports and concentrated projects that will absorb manpower.

3. To strive to achieve internal and external balance by reducing the deficit in the general budget and by bolstering the balance of payments to safeguard stability in the dinar exchange rate and in the general standard of payments.

4. To achieve social security through balanced distribution of the burden of the comprehensive national program of economic reform among the categories and regions of the society.

The government will adopt a group of financial and monetary policies alongside other economic policies capable of achieving these foundations and goals.

In the field of financial policy, the comprehensive national program of economic reform will achieve its goals through increasing revenues, controlling and rationining government expenditure, and reducing the deficit in the general budget before taking external aid into account. This will help curb inflation and encourage investment in productive projects.

Regarding local revenues, the government will adopt the following guidelines:

1. To spread the tax burden in a just manner among all categories of society. In this field, the amended tax law approved by the government as a provisional law—the law submitted to your honorable House—provides an increase in tax exemptions for low-income categories and a reduction in tax exemptions for high-income categories.

2. To review the structure of the tax system by relying on direct taxes, such as the income tax, and the indirect tax on commodities and services, such as the consumption tax, with less dependence on customs revenues and by simplifying and uniting them as much as we can.

3. To collect fair fees for services offered by the government and its institutions, taking into consideration alleviation of such fees for the poor and those with low income.

4. To continue providing tax encouragement for investment and export projects by continuously endeavoring to rationalize this encouragement.

In general, the government believes the income from taxes according to current tax laws is sufficient to meet the needs of the treasury without any increase in or basic additions to taxes. The focus will be on the method to obtain taxes and on reducing the size of exemptions as much as possible.

With regard to general expenses, which constitute one half of the gross national product, the government's policy aims at curbing and rationalizing the rise in these expenses on the following objectives:

1. To maintain the level of basic services despite the rise in their costs and the burden they constitute on the treasury.

2. To maintain an appropriate level of capital expenditure, to safeguard national investments in the infrastructure, and to continue carrying out new governmental projects, particularly in the field of educational development, health, water, and phosphate production.

3. To review conditions of the independent governmental corporations to insure better administration and to make them more competent and dependent on their own resources.

4. To continue the policy of subsidizing basic commodities and to rationalize that subsidy and direct it toward the factions that deserve it.

We have to point out what makes it difficult to control the volume of government expenditure is the sharp drop in the dinar's exchange rate, a fact that has resulted in an increase in the commitments of the general budget in dinars to repaying the installments of the foreign debt and interests and to purchasing basic commodities and services.

Regarding the internal and external public debt, the government will adopt the following policies:

a. Limitation of governmental borrowing, both internal and external, within the limitations of the general budget law, which your honorable House will endorse.

b. Government commitment to valid laws in its internal borrowing, especially the laws of the laws of the Central Bank of Jordan and the public debt law, and the need to not invoke exceptional status to violate these laws. The government will strive to stop resorting to the banking establishments to finance its activities and expenses.

c. Securing foreign loans to fall within the comprehensive national program for economic reform; obtaining loans from international establishments to finance development projects, support the balance of payment, or support imported foods on the condition the assets of the demanded loans will not, at the end of 1990, exceed the assets of the loans at the end of 1988.

d. Converting the largest portion of commercial loans into long-term loans from international establishments under easy terms.
e. Consideration of possibly promulgating the general public debt law to organize and control the securing of foreign loans and the channels through which they are spent.
f. Easing the foreign debt burden by rescheduling foreign debts maturing in 1991 and 1992, and exerting utmost effort to obtain the best terms to avoid the accumulation and burden of the debt.

In the field of monetary policy and the balance of payment, the government will adopt the following guidelines:
1. To reinforce the independence of the Central Bank to secure its role in preserving monetary stability, to maintain stability in the dinar's value, build up the national reserve of foreign currency, and to direct deposits according to the comprehensive national program for economic reform. The government also will bolster the role of the Central Bank in overseeing financial and banking establishments to safeguard them and guarantee sound transactions according to sound financial bases.
2. To achieve external balancing and improve balance of payment through the aforesaid financial and monetary policy, and through encouragement of investment and export by activating the role of the private sector within the following policies:
a. Reinforcement of the roles of the private sector and its establishments so it will be come one of the basic pillars of the comprehensive national economic reform program, and adjustment of legislation steering the performance of this sector to provide a suitable climate to increase its contribution to the process of investment, production, and development.
b. Proceeding with the operation of institutional development to support investment and export by setting up a corporation to finance exports and another to secure them, to develop one of the existing corporations to undertake the operation of marketing investment and Jordanian exports, and to reinforce the role of the specifications department by improving the quality of the Jordanian industries to enable them to compete in international markets.
c. Identification of high caliber industries to improve them and define the industrial items Jordan produces in considerable amounts to further expand them.
d. Rendering special attention to sectors with high growth capabilities, and to small projects with high revenue regarding labor and ability to export.

Honorable Representatives: The Palestine question is Jordan's basic, fateful cause. The government hence is committed to supporting the Palestinian people, backing their national rights, and bolstering their just struggle under the PLO, their sole legitimate representative. The government believes the decision to sever legal and administrative ties with the occupied West Bank was in response to demands by the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian people and also was in line with the general Arab desire to highlight the Palestinian identity. This decision bolstered the blessed popular Palestinian intifadah, provided it with exuberant political support, and restored the issue to its roots. That is, this decision restored the image of the Palestinian cause to one of a colonized people aspiring to achieve their independence on their national soil. The government asserts this decision in no way weakens the historical national and pan-Arab ties binding Jordan to Palestine—the ties that have been cherished by the Hashemites over the years. The government consequently will continue honoring Jordan's enduring commitment to supporting the fraternal Palestinian Arab people in their just struggle, backing their blessed intifadah, and providing them with further support through various ways and means, including support to martyrs' families, marketing of products, supporting the economy, and regulating the freedom of movement in Jordan. The government will strive to study the humanitarian aspects of the personal effects left by the decision to sever legal and administrative ties and to take measures that will alleviate burdens and dispel worries without tampering with the essence of this decision.

The government will continue honoring all commitments Jordan has made regarding Jerusalem, the al-Aqsa Mosque, the Ibrahimi Mosque, the shari'a courts in the occupied West Bank, the Jerusalem awqaf, and the schools and colleges entailed in honoring such commitments. The government will continue supporting the steadfastness of the Palestinian people through the Joint Jordanian-Palestinian Committee. The government actively will continue efforts to restore the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and the installations of the al-Aqsa Mosque, out of an awareness of its historic responsibilities, which are dictated by our long-standing heritage regarding defending and maintaining holy places.

The government will continue supporting fraternal Iraq in its efforts to achieve peace in a manner that would ensure its legitimate rights on its soil and territorial waters, terminate attempts to interfere in its internal affairs, and guarantee the security of the region's states, as well as their stability based on good neighborliness and mutual respect for the sovereignty and independence of each of these states. The government supports the intensifying efforts to develop the Iraq-Iran cease-fire agreement and turn it into a just and durable peace between the two neighboring Islamic states, to prevent the current status from turning into one of no-war no-peace, particularly considering more than a year has elapsed since the end of hostilities and that serious dangers threatening the security of the entire region are entailed in the creation of such status.

The government will work to follow up on international efforts being made to bring Iraqi and Iranian views closer to resume direct peace negotiations according to provisions contained in the cease-fire agreement, aiming to implement UN Security Council Resolution No 598. The government moreover appeals to the Iranian leaders to respond favorably to the humanitarian need to swap prisoners of war and their repatriation according to injunctions of the true Islamic religion and with provisions contained in international conventions.

Concerning the Lebanese crisis, the government, with the fraternal Arab countries, will work to help Lebanon overcome this crisis, from which the fraternal Lebanese have suffered much for 15 years. The government will continue supporting the good efforts of the Higher Tripartite Arab Committee and the new Lebanese leadership to proceed with implementing the al-Ta'if agreement. The government believes continuing the Lebanese problem will have the most dire consequences on pan-Arab security and the national security of our countries. This necessitates intensive efforts to secure Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, and to implement Security Council Resolution No 425 on the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from Lebanese territories so the Lebanese can regain full sovereignty over their land and return to their natural position within their Arab nation.

The government will direct its efforts toward consolidating the march of the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC] in all aspects, proceeding from the noble pan-Arab bases and objectives of the council, so the council can be as his majesty the king and his brother leaders of the ACC member states desire; namely, a pioneering pan-Arab experience and a developed formula of pan-Arab action. The aim is upgrading the council to a distinguished and successful model of economic and social development on unionist bases when economic groups have begun playing an important role in the international scene. The government hopes the ACC, together with the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union, will help support common pan-Arab action to upgrade the status of our nation.

Our national efforts and actions within the ACC will be directed toward supporting common action in its wider framework—the Arab League—in a way that would guarantee promotion of the league to cope with the requirements of the age and secure our Arab nation's interests in its dealings with world nations.

The government will continue strengthening and promoting Jordan's bilateral relations will all Arab countries, proceeding from bonds of fraternity and from fidelity to our commitment to the Arab League Charter and Arab summit resolutions. The government in particular will work to deepen cooperation with fraternal neighboring Arab countries: Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Syria. It also will continue the policy of openness, communication, and interaction with world nations and international organizations to secure and protect our national interests while exercising our pioneering role in service of our Arab and Islamic issues.

The government will continue acting to entrench bonds of brotherhood with Islamic countries, both bilaterally and through our effective role in the Islamic Conference Organization. It will build bridges of cooperation and friendship with Nonaligned Movement member states, in line with the movement's principles of positive neutrality and refrain from polarization. The government, proceeding from commitment to the UN Charter, will continue developing Jordan's relations with various world nations based on mutual respect and interests and in harmony with collective Arab stances toward those nations. The government will respect bilateral agreements betwen Jordan and other countries and will work in accordance with these agreements, serving our joint interests. The government will seek to develop these agreements and revise them in coordination with other concerned parties whenever this is necessary and in harmony with our commitments to these agreements.

Esteemed Deputies, the government feels it is necessary to contemplate the past with all its burdens and the future with all its possibilities and challenges. We have experienced an acute economic crisis. Thanks to Almighty God, the determination of Jordan's inspired leadership, and the awareness of its genuine people, Jordan managed to contain this crisis. It is one of the people's characteristics to review their past, assess their experiences, and examine their true state of affairs objectively, freely, and with a full sense of responsibility. From this premise, and based on its eagerness to derive the maximum benefit of past experience, the government expresses readiness to fully respond to the nation's representatives so it can provide full information for an investigation of the causes and exploration of the roles that led to the economic setback we experienced. This is aimed at determining responsibilities and drawing lessons. The government is committed to taking required legal measures to track down any incriminated person and to take him to court in accordance with the law. [applause]

Esteemed Deputies, while stressing interest in cooperating with your honorable chamber to entrench the pillars of democracy and consultation between the executive and legislative authorities, to take care of the people's interests, and to shoulder the responsibility of building Jordan and maintaining its democratic experience, the government presents this policy statement to you, requesting a vote of confidence on its basis. We pray God to lead our steps to serve our dear Jordan and to keep it a free and strong homeland. We pray God preserve His Majesty King Husayn [applause] as the leader of our march toward new horizons of progress and prosperity. Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate now after Thou hast guided us, but grant us mercy from thine own presence; for Thou art the grantor of bounties without measure. [Koranic verse] May peace and blessings of God be upon you. [applause]

'Arafat Arrives in Amman, Makes Statement

JN1912172389 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] His Excellency Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has arrived in Amman on a visit to Jordan during which he will hold talks with His Majesty King Husayn and senior officials. He was welcomed by Prime Minister Mudar Badran and a number of senior officials. His excellency the Palestinian president made a statement to journalists in which he said:

[Begin 'Arafat recording] I clearly must indicate that the relationship between us and his majesty the king and brother officials in Jordan, as well as between us and the Jordanian people, is not merely one of coordination. It is much more than that. It is a relationship within the same family constantly referred to by His Majesty King Husayn. It is my pleasure to come here at any possible opportunity to consult with his majesty the king, the prime minister, and other brother officials on all that interests our primary cause—the Palestine question—and our Arab nation on all levels. At the same time, I congratulate the Jordanian people for the election results and their beautiful and strong democracy, which is a solid basis of action for his majesty the king, the Jordanian people, and their government. I congratulate them for the parliamentary election results, wishing Jordan under this democratic atmosphere adopted by His Majesty King Husayn all progress and success. I wish the joint Jordanian-Palestinian march further success. I hope we will be able to perform prayers together, God willing, at the first of the qiblahs and the third of holy places, holy Jerusalem. [end recording]

Responding to a question on Jordanian-Palestinian relations, Prime Minister Mudar Badran said:

[Begin Badran recording] The Palestinian-Jordanian relationship, as Brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] has stated, stems from one point, namely the good of the Palestine question and the Palestinian people. We in Jordan are Palestinians where the Palestine question is concerned. We disagree on nothing. We support all the PLO's efforts and steps because they are in the interest of the Palestine question and the Palestinian people. Regarding the topics to be discussed, we will listen to Brother Abu-'Ammar. I believe, if Abu-'Ammar allows me to say it, that he always puts us and his majesty the king in the picture of any new developments concerning the Palestine question. Jordan supports the PLO's steps in this regard, given the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In any future role, Jordan is prepared to support all these efforts. [end recording]

'Awn Sets Conditions to 'Facilitate Matters'

NC1512151389 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1230 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] In connection with rebel General 'Awn's insistence on his destructive plans, it has been learned that Air Force Brigadier General Fawzi Abu-Farhat and Colonel 'Amir Shihab, whom 'Awn dispatched to Paris to meet with President al-Hirawi's envoy Deputy Butrus Harb, conveyed a proposal from 'Awn, indicating that he is willing to facilitate matters on the following conditions:

There should be an immediate Syrian withdrawal, even if partial, from certain areas; a government should be formed in which 'Awn would be given a basic portfolio; he would also participate in choosing the Christian ministers; he would be appointed deputy in lieu of the late Deputy Nadim N'im and would participate in appointing the Christian deputies; and senior officers of his entourage would be appointed to leading posts.

It was also learned that these conditions were rejected and that the two envoys were informed that any discussion of these conditions is absolutely out of the question.

Birri Satisfied With Measures Against 'Awn

NC1612081989 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] Minister Nabih Birri has said that Lebanon is no longer unified and can only be restored by force. He said that the U.S. position is indecisive, not genuine, and suspect. It intends to put the Lebanese issue in cold storage.

In an interview with the newspaper AL-LIWA' today, Minister Birri accused the Arab committee of not fulfilling its duty in ending the partitionist situation, noting that its visit to the pope was harmful and accorded a victory to 'Awn. He said: The problem is not whether the committee meets the pope or not. The committee can pressure the United States so the latter can pressure Israel to implement Resolution 425.

Minister Birri affirmed that the 'Awn phenomenon can only be resolved by force. He noted that 'Awn's statements about sovereignty will lead to Lebanon's loss. He warned that the Vatican's position is a crusader position and affirmed that the Maronites will be harmed the most if Lebanon is partitioned.

We are at the verge of Lebanon's collapse, he said, adding: They are trying to extend the border strip inside. They are awaiting the connection.

Minister Birri saw improvement in the French position, although it is somewhat late. He maintained that Ja'ja' is fighting 'Awn, but both share the same principles.

After expressing satisfaction with the current administrative and diplomatic measures against 'Awn, Minister Birri noted that Army Commander General Lahhud is now trying to provide the Army's needs to lead the liberation battle.

He said: The al-Awwali bridge operation [the attack on the Syrians in al-Rumaylah] is a suspicious one. What happened in western al-Biqa' [between Amal and Hizballah] promotes partition, and the Beirut clashes were the result of tension.

Wants Military Action Against 'Awn

NC1712085889 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Minister Nabih Birri thinks that Lebanon has been partitioned and that the present situation reflects this partition more clearly than at any time before. In an interview with the newspaper AL-DIYAR, he said that the current situation in the eastern area will only lead to Lebanon's partition. He asked: Then what happens to sovereignty? Birri affirmed that after partition, every mini-state will be a satellite of the big powers in the region and the world; consequently, no state will have any sovereignty.

Birri noted that liberation stems from Lebanon's unity and not vice versa. Without unity we cannot talk about sovereignty, he said. If General 'Awn were elected president of the Republic, he added, the disadvantages of the al-Ta'if document would have turned into advantages because Gen 'Awn's aim, since the end of President al-Jumayyil's term, has been to be elected president.

Minister Birri denied that the decision to standardize passports was aimed against the residents of the eastern area. The decision as intended to prevent trading in passports, as occurred during President Amin al-Jumayyil's term.

Birri sees military action against Gen 'Awn as the only solution. He said: I can hold out in the South just as Gen 'Awn is holding out in B'abda, and I can rally 200 times as many people around me as he can.

'Awn Addresses Students at B'abda 'Sit-In'

NC1912150689 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] The sit-in in B'abda continued today for the 23d consecutive day, with students from 14 schools taking part.

Prime Minister General 'Awn addressed the students. He said: Your raised and extended hands in B'abda today will reach other parts of Lebanon and help liberate the country. Today, we established our march, the march of liberation, and tomorrow we will head toward the north, south, and al-Biqa'.

Your fellow students in the occupied areas are the ones who will liberate the homeland very soon. The days of bowing the head before the occupier have gone forever.

Now is the time for emergence to freedom, sovereignty, and independence and for refusal of the tutelage of the great ones and their followers.

Birri Wants Syrian Forces Used Against B'abda

NC1612150089 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] Amal Movement leader Minister Nabih Birri has called for the implementation of the clause in the al-Ta'if agreement which provides for seeking the help of the Syrian Arab forces, in order to terminate the anomalous situation in B'abda and al-Yarzah. Minister Birri criticized the U.S. position toward the political and security developments, describing it as two-faced. He emphasized that the United States is trying to put the Lebanese issue on ice, politically speaking, to suit its own interests.

Minister Birri cautioned against solving regional issues at the expense of the Lebanese issue.

'Awn Says Syria Has 40,000 Troops in Lebanon

NC1912154989 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1515 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] In an interview with the French magazine PARIS MATCH, General Michel 'Awn said that surrendering his post as prime minister, accepting the election of Ilyas al-Hirawi, and approving the al-Ta'if agreement means handing over everything to the Syrians, who want to annex Lebanon.

He added: In the coming days, we may have to engage in a battle, because it seems that Syria wants to end this situation. He noted that Syria has strengthened its positions and brought reinforcements. Before there were 30,000 Syrian soldiers in Lebanon, and today there are approximately 40,000 soldiers who are equipped with all necessary weapons and heavy artillery, he said.

Comments on 'Syrian Offensive'

NC2012082889 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] The French magazine PARIS MATCH has cited Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn as saying during his recent meeting with General (Jeannot Lacase), a French deputy: We might be compelled to engage in a battle in the coming days because it appears that Syria wants to end this situation. Syria has strengthened its positions and brought in reinforcements. It has approximately 40,000 soldiers in Lebanon with all the necessary equipment, including heavy artillery.

General 'Awn added: At best, we can last 4 days in confronting an all-out Syrian offensive supported by the allies of Damascus in Beirut. After that, we will have no ammunition and the calamity will occur.

Phalangist Leader on Syrian Withdrawals

NC1612161589 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] In an interview with the weekly magazine AL-HAWADITH, Phalangist Party leader Dr George Sa'adah has stated: There are Arab guarantees for Syrian withdrawals and for Lebanon to regain its health. This is sufficient as long as the liberation war is unable to achieve liberation for real local, regional, and international reasons.

Dr Sa'adah said that, since its establishment, the Phalangist Party has been a support for legitimacy; hence its recognition of the legitimacy of the presidential elections. He called for the participation of everyone, including General 'Awn, in the national accord government. He said: We must all participate in this government so that it may be a national unity government.

Information Minister Discusses Developments

NC1712150489 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Information and Justice Minister Edmond Rizq affirmed today that the national accord government will not be a government of war but a law and order government. It will use every effective and legal means to establish security in Lebanon and to put an end to the partitionist state.

Speaking during a get-acquainted meeting with correspondents of the Arab newspapers, Minister Rizq said that the Army establishment, under the command of General Emile Lahhud, is able to deal suitably with the state of rebellion and disobedience. It will pursue the measures which it has adopted. All the ministries will also deal with any partitionist or separatist move with the necessary means.

Referring to the country's financial situation, he said: We are suffering from the expropriation of state resources. The usurpation of power, the partitionist state, and the security disturbance are the main reasons for the treasury deficit.

Minister Rizq noted that the preparedness of the Lebanese Armed Forces will determine the mechanism for imposing sovereignty, and that there is no other factor or consideration. He noted that Syria has expressed on more than one occasion to the tripartite Arab committee and to others its readiness to offer all the necessary facilities to Lebanese legitimacy and to speed up the implementation of what was agreed upon in al-Ta'if. Any action to impose sovereignty depends only on the ability of the Lebanese state to carry out this action by its own forces.

Minister Rizq noted that the existing situation in the eastern area is being dealt with objectively on the basis of the government's legitimate position and policy. He explained that any contact held by any ambassador or representative accredited to the Lebanese state for the purpose of reconciliation must be based on the undisputable principle of the need to put an end to the state of rebellion and disobedience and on acceptance of the sole legitimate authority in the country—namely, the elected president of the Republic and the national accord government, which has the unanimous support of the Chamber of Deputies. Minister Rizq added: Offering advice is not prohibited, but equating legitimacy with illegitimacy is rejected.

Answering a question, Minister Rizq said: Dr George Sa'adah was one of the most prominent workers for the al-Ta'if agreement. He still adheres to his positive stand. Dr Sa'adah has reaffirmed that whether he attends the meetings of the national accord government or not and whether he exercises his ministerial post or not, he considers it the legitimate government that embodies the will for peace.

Regarding the recent visits of the tripartite Arab committee, the information minister said that the tour of the foreign ministers of the committee's member states to Damascus, Baghdad, Paris, and Rome—and in which there was a problem regarding the Vatican visit—was successful in all its stages. He noted that the French position is clear and unambiguious. It supports the al-Ta'if agreement. However, there is freedom of opinion and democracy in France. If a certain person or group speaks out, even if they have representative capacity, this does not mean that the official French position is false or changing.

Minister Rizq said: The Vatican's fine diplomacy and the positive spirit among the Arab states, particularly the members of the tripartite Arab committee, will make it possible to overcome the problem that took place. If there was a delay in supporting the legitimacy on the part of any foreign quarter, this could be due to some sort of normal delay to allow more chance for the success of the course of the legitimacy in Lebanon and for establishing peace. The Lebanese Government rejects any foreign intervention which contradicts the establishment of peace in Lebanon or the establishment of national accord and preservation of the country's unity under a legitimate rule representing all the spiritual families and embodying the will for coexistence among them.

Minister Rizq said: The tripartite committee deserves thanks, appreciation, and support by all. The Vatican is among the first which is called upon to bless and support the tripartitee committee's efforts to establish peace. We know from experience that the Vatican's firm position is to continue calling for reconciliation among the Lebanese sects and for peace in Lebanon. This call is in the core of the Vatican's spiritual and temporal message, and expresses a correct understanding of the interests of the Christians and all the Lebanese people.

He noted that Italy has shown some sort of enthusiasm for ensuring the success of the tripartite committee's mission. Practical results of the Italian efforts on the European and international levels are expected to appear soon.

Answering a question, Minister Rizq said that Iraq has not opposed the al-Ta'if agreement. During its recent visit to Baghdad, the tripartite committee sensed a desire to assist in the establishment of peace in Lebanon. If there are reservations, this is due to some issues linked to bilateral Arab relations and not to the Lebanese issue.

Concluding, Minister Rizq said: It is time for our suffering people to say good-bye to violence and terrorism, good-bye to partition, division, and relocation, and welcome to new, united, free, sovereign, and independent Lebanon, the Lebanon of love and peace.

Ja'ja' on Resistance Day, 'Military Option'

NC1912212989 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1945 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Lebanese Forces Commander Dr Samir Ja'ja' has announced that Resistance Day will be celebrated on 26 December. He said: Christ was born on 25 December, so may 26 December mark Lebanon's new birth. The whole world should understand that a free people live in East Beirut, who decided 15 years ago to remake their future and to establish a truly secure, free, and independent homeland. Fifteen years ago, the state's structure did not allow us to have a free homeland.

Ja'ja' said that the Lebanese Forces and the Lebanese people have expressed themselves in the past will continue to do so in the future so that the world will never forget that we live in this country and are determined to stay here.

Speaking before delegations who visited him today, Ja'ja' said that resistance means continued pursuit of the goals leading to the liberation of the country from all foreign armies, the establishment of a new political system in Lebanon that does not permit new assaults on it and that does not leave loopholes through which the Iranians, Syrians, Palestinians, Israelis, or other foreign armies may infiltrate in the country.

The attainment of resistance's goals, Ja'ja' said, may require fighting, (?sharing), politics, silence, or popular action. We have at hand a comprehensive political work. War is just an instance of political work. War is not enough if used alone. Unless we use all the means at our disposal, including limited military operations which take place in the occupied Lebanese areas, political proposals, and political relations with the major world countries, we will not be able to reach our goals.

It is in the nature of our work that we have to use the most suitable means to attain the objectives in every stage. What matters is to be able to achieve our objectives with the least possible losses. What matters to us in the resistance is to attain genuine liberation at the least cost to the nation, regardless of any noises that may be made. Ja'ja' said that the intelligent leader is one who would win the war without actually fighting. War must be the last resort.

Ja'ja' added: On this basis, and considering our position and the nature of our cause, our resistance, and the enemy that we face, we have to rely on all the possible means. The latter include armed resistance, political action, and foreign relations. I am convinced that no country can solve its problems alone.

Ja'ja' said that a nation that abandons its military option is doomed. Military options should always be available, but other options should be used as well. Ja'ja' added: Military option means always being prepared for confrontation if force is used against you. We do not take lightly threats issued from outside East Beirut and those who issue these threats should know better.

Ja'ja' said that a military option is a double-edged sword and that if it is used unsuitably it could hurt those who use it. The Lebanese Forces, he asserted, will use all the possible means. The military option is always a possibility, he said.

Ja'ja' said: It is wrong to think that resistance—and this goes for the Lebanese Forces as much as any other resistance group—should mean groups of fighters always firing guns and fighting constantly. There are historical instances of resistance that limited itself to the military domain and had no other political dimension or tactic, such as the French resistance, but not all countries or all circumstances are alike.

Dr Ja'ja' said: Let us look forward to the resistance day on 26 December and to every day that brings us closer to the new Lebanon. Ja'ja' underlined the importance of popular demonstrations as a way to express opinions. Popular demonstrations in East Beirut, he said, proved that in moments of danger Christians are willing to use all means, including demonstrations, to reject any threat to the free areas and to all that is imposed on national will. The demonstrations also symbolize their belief in freedom, in the homeland, and in independence.

'Awn Wants UN To Supervise Elections in Jan

NC2012075489 (Clandestine) The Lebanese Radio in Arabic 0600 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn has continued his activities at the domestic level. It has been learned that the Interior Ministry is trying to complete the preparation of lists before the date set for parliamentary elections at the end of the 1st week of January 1990. The ministry is preparing to take the necessary measures in this respect. Meanwhile, Gen 'Awn will request the United Nations to supervise the elections in all of Lebanon and assume its responsibility in providing the people with an opportunity to determine their own fate.

Fadlallah Says Amal-Hizballah Fighting To Resume

NC1612093589 Beirut Voice of National Resistance in Arabic 0530 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah expects the fighting between the Amal Movement and Hizballah to resume, and says: There is a mutual [word indistinct] state in the South that strife would resume there. He added that attempts are being made to strain the relations to weaken the people in the South, Beirut's Southern Suburb, and al-Biqa'.

Syrians Warn Amal, Hizballah To End Hostilities

NC1912204789 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 2000 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] A meeting was held today at the Syrian observers headquarters chaired by Brigadier General 'Ali Hammud. It was attended by Amal Movement and Hizballah representatives. Both sides were informed of a decision by the Syrian Arab forces to halt all kidnappings and mutual aggression between the Movement and Hizballah. They were also issued a warning that the party that violates the resolution will be held accountable. The Syrian forces will adopt strict security measures in West Beirut and the Southern Suburb to quell any violation by any side.

Fighting East of Sidon; Israelis Shell Area

NC1912203489 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 2000 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Fighting with artillery and rockets between the positions of the Ma'ruf Sa'd Forces of the Popular Liberation Army and the Lahd militia's positions on the Lib'a-'Ayn-al-Mir-Kafr Falus combat lines which began at 1800 today is continuing. Shells have fallen in residential neighborhoods close to the battle lines.

We have just learned that the Dahr al-Wahsh area is coming under mortar fire from the positions facing it.

Meanwhile, an official source in the Nasirite Popular Organization [NPO] has announced that at a time when contacts have started to yield positive results and concrete measures to remedy the causes of the recent incident in Sidon and Iqlim al-Kharrub area, the Zionist enemy and his agents have meddled in the matter and are attempting to create new security confusion in order to exacerbate divisions among the people of the same ranks.

The NPO source added that the enemy and his agents provoked a military incident this evening on the Kafr Falus front and opened fire with 155-mm artillery guns on the Popular Liberation Army's positions along the entire length of the front. The source said they also bombarded populated neighborhoods on the Sidon-Kafr Falus confrontation line which forced the Popular Army to retaliate in order to silence the sources of fire.

The NPO source said the security eruption which the enemy has provoked must drive everyone to realize how serious the current stage is and noted that it requires a level of alliance capable of confronting all possible enemy actions. The source urged the Lebanese nationalist and Palestinian forces to join forces and direct their guns at the Zionist enemy who threatens everyone.

Resistance Attacks in South; Casualties Reported

NC1912150289 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1230 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] The Martyr Ahmad Nasir al-Din group detonated an explosive charge as a joint patrol of the occupation forces and their agents was passing on a military road in the central sector linking 'Alman and al-Shumariyah at dawn today.

The Resistance Front issued a statement, saying the explosion destroyed a vehicle and killed or wounded its crew members. Subsequently, the Israeli occupation forces launched a large-scale search of the surrounding hills and valleys.

Meanwhile, the Resistance Front issued a statement today, announcing a new qualitative operation its heroes carried out in al-Habbariyah valley at noon yesterday, Monday, against a joint patrol of the occupation forces and the militias.

The statement said the resistance men ambushed the patrol in al-Habbariyah valley, west of the highway between the Shwayya and Shab'a townships. As the patrol, which was raking the area, arrived at the site of the amush, the Martyr Mahmud al-M'ush group opened machinegun and rocket fire at the patrol members. In the ensuing fierce clash, which lasted more than 15 minutes, the resistance men managed to detach the first reconnaissance contingent from the main force, which retreated after three of its members were killed and their bodies left on the battle site.

The resistance statement added that the enemy's reconnaissance unit then attempted to circumvent the resistance men from the rear, when another resistance group confronted the unit. A violent clash lasting more than half an hour ensued, during which the resistance men were able to silence all the fire sources.

Enemy reinforcements, supported by three helicopters, arrived to help comb the area.

The front's statement affirmed that another clash took place on the entrance to Shwayya town between an occupation force and the resistance men, during which a personnel carrier and a jeep were destroyed and a helicopter was seen landing at the site to evacuate the casualties.

Rocket Fire in Suburb; Syrians Operate Patrols

NC1912214889 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2115 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Between 2130 and 2215 today rocket fire was heard in Burj al-Barajinah and other areas of the Southern Suburb, where friction between Amal and Hizballah was reported this afternoon. Syrian forces tonight began operating patrols in the Southern Suburb, following mobilization by Amal and Hizballah gunmen in the evening.

Mountain Under Fire; Israelis Overfly Sidon

NC2012150089 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1400 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] The towns of Kayfun, 'Ayn 'Nub and their surrounding hills, 'Aytat and Shimlan on the mountain are coming under heavy-caliber artillery and machinegun fire from the opposite positions of al-Yarzah ['Awn] army cliques.

In another development, Israeli warplanes overflew Sidon and the Palestinian camps at 1510 after having carried out similar sorties earlier in the afternoon. The aircraft drew antiaircraft fire before heading for the occupied territories.

Al-Shar' Meets With ICRC President, Comments

JN1912142889 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Damascus—Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' today received Cornelio Sommaruga, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], who is accompanied by (Biskava), director general of the ICRC's operations in the Middle East. Dia'allah al-Fattal, assistant foreign minister, and the director of the international organizations at the Foreign Ministry attended the meeting. The talks dealt with the kidnapping of two ICRC employees in the Sidon area.

The foreign minister stressed Syria's strong condemnation of hostage-taking, particularly of those who work for humanitarian organizations. He also stressed the Syrian Government's concern about helping in every possible way the ICRC perform its humanitarian tasks.

Relations With Egypt Arouse Worldwide Interest

JN1912163389 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 18 Dec 89

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Arab Solidarity," the newspaper TISHRIN says: If Syrian-Egyptian relations arouse the interest of the region's political circles, as well as in the world, it is because they embrace certain traits that always have reflected positively on the Arabs and their causes. A review of historical events underscores the decisive role of these relations in emphasizing the Arab right and defending the nation's rights.

TISHRIN adds: Syria and Egypt never have met without serving and benefitting the Arab right in view of their great potential and capabilities. Through their cooperation and understanding, the two countries are capable of uniting all Arabs and giving priority to pan-Arab and crucial issues over emergent and artificial ones. TISHRIN says: From this stems the Arab and international interest the exchanging of messages and envoys between Presidents al-Asad and Mubarak to consolidate cohesion and joint endeavors to strengthen and reactivate Arab solidarity in favor of Arab rights.

Al-Ahmar Addresses Ba'thist Party Meeting

JN2012080289 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Excerpt] Latakia—The Latakia Ba'th Party branch held its annual meeting at the cultural center in Latakia this morning. The meeting was attended by comrades 'Abdallah al-Ahmar, Ba'th Party assistant secretary general; Fayiz al-Nasir, Ba'th Party Regional Command member; 'Abd al-Karim Abu-Sakhr, party audit committee member; Dr Muhsin al-Khayyir, Latakia Ba'th Party branch secretary; Hasan Shahwan, Latakia governor; members of the Central Committee in Latakia; and the Latakia Ba'th Party branch members.

Comrade al-Ahmar addressed the conferees. He began his speech by conveying leader struggler Hafiz al-Asad's love and greetings to the Ba'thist comrades and the masses in the Latakia Governorate. Comrade al-Ahmar then explained current political developments in the Arab and international arena. Al-Ahmar reaffirmed Syria's firm and principled pan-Arab stand in confronting imperialist schemes which target the Arab struggle in general and continue to concoct conspiracies everywhere, benefiting from the negative state of affairs represented by the divisions and fragmentation our Arab nation experiences.

Comrade al-Ahmar emphasized the importance of Arab solidarity and its attainment as an advanced step on the road to unity and as a reply to imperialist conspiracies. He said Syria continues to work within this framework, and that what is taking place these days is part of this outline and approach.

Comrade Al-Ahmar said Arab unity is the normal state of affairs of our Arab nation, and anything else is anomalous. He added Arab unity nowadays is a sine qua non in light of this century's challenges.

On Lebanon, comrade Al-Ahmar reaffirmed Syria's support for Lebanese legitimacy, represented in the Lebanese president and the national accord government, to enable it to impose its sovereignty over all Lebanese territory and to overcome anomalous phenomena, such as rebel 'Awn, which seek to harm Lebanon and establish a sectarian state on part of Lebanon, backed by the Iraqi regime, Israel, and some international forces that continue behaving with an outdated colonialist mentality. Al-Ahmar stressed the need to continue supporting the Lebanese in the liberation of occupied southern Lebanon, and for safeguarding their unity, Arab affiliation, and independence. [passage omitted]

Bangladesh

Security Forces Kill 2 'Activists' in Rangamati

BK1712160889 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Security forces have shot dead two activists of the so-called Shanti Bahini [Peace Force] at (Paktikapara) under Longadu upazila [subdistrict] of Rangamati hill district. Official sources say the activists were killed yesterday while exchanging fire from their hideout with the security forces.

The sources say another Shanti Bahini activist surrendered to the security forces at Bankiapara in Ramgarh upazila with two country-made guns.

Military Might Displayed at Victory Day Parade

BK1612093489 Hong Kong AFP in English 0903 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] Dhaka, Dec 16 (AFP)—Dhaka showed off its military might Saturday [16 December] at a parade marking the country's 19th victory day here as tanks rolled through the streets and fighter jets raced overhead.

President Hussain Mohammad Ershad was visibly pleased as he reviewed the parade and took the salute, flanked by chiefs of the three defence services.

The three-hour-long display included a large number of tanks, which have usually been kept out of such ceremonies since the country's first coup in 1975 toppled the Awami League regime of President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Twenty-eight reportedly new Chinese-made tanks roared past with their guns bowed while paratroopers touched down at the ceremony site.

General Ershad, 59, who seized power in a 1982 bloodless coup, congratulated his countrymen and in a statement called for united efforts to achieve success in a "new struggle for self-reliance by removing poverty and promoting extensive industrialisation."

The former East Pakistan became independent after a nine-month war which ended in victory on December 16, 1971.

Defence sources said computer-operated anti-tank guided missile and radar-equipped field guns as well as anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons were also on display.

Fighter jets including MiG-21s, F-7s, F-6s and F-1s flew in formation.

Leading opposition political figure Sheikh Hasina Wajed of the Awami League called for the launching of a "1971-type of movement for restoring democracy and upholding the spirit of the war of independence."

Chairwoman Begum Khaleda Zia of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party said the nation "is observing its victory at a time when autocratic rulers have snatched away the rights of the people."

According to available statistics the strength of the total armed forces is 101,500 with more than 30,000 reserves.

Defense spending of 315.4 million dollars was the largest chunk of the national budget announced last June, a 26.5 million dollar rise over 1988.

The 110 million people of impoverished and overpopulated Bangladesh have a per capita income of 173 dollars, one of the world's lowest.

India

Singh Comments on Punjab, Kashmir, Sri Lanka

BK1912162589 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] The prime minister has ruled out any surrender to separatist or secessionist forces in Punjab. He said the real task, however, is to unite the hearts. Mr Vishwanath Pratap Singh was addressing the first meeting of the National Front parliamentary party in New Delhi today. Saying that there are difficulties in finding a solution to the Punjab problem, he pointed out that a good beginning has been made. The prime minister welcomed the response of the Akali Dal-Mann group to the initiative taken by the government to solve the Punjab problem.

The prime minister said that the government will accord top priority to restoration of peaceful conditions in Jammu and Kashmir, while trying to find a solution to the problem in the state. He observed that the Kashmir problem has been made more complex because of long neglect. Emphasizing the need to strengthen nationalist forces in the state, the prime minister said it has to be viewed as a national issue and not as a problem of any party. Mr V.P. Singh affirmed that the government will seek the cooperation of all political parties, including the Congress-I, in solving major national issues. The prime minister emphasized that while everything promised in the National Front's manifesto cannot be given immediately, the government will go ahead keeping in mind the unity and emotional integration of the country as the ultimate goal.

Referring to the ongoing agitation against reservation, the prime minister said reservations have to continue till social inequalities are removed.

He mentioned about the government's efforts to improve relations with Sri Lanka and Nepal and to strengthen friendship with the United States and the Soviet Union. He said while accelerating the withdrawal of the PKF [Peacekeeping Force] from Sri Lanka, the safety of Tamils will be kept in mind.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, [Parliamentary Affairs Minister] Mr P. Upendra said the prime minister reiterated major commitments of the National Front government.

Mr V.P. Singh said the planning commission will be made more effective to meet the economic requirements of the nation.

President Addresses Joint Session of Parliament

BK2012084489 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 0530 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Address by President R. Venkataraman to joint session of parliament at the Central Hall of Parliament in New Delhi—live]

[Text] Honorable members: It gives me great pleasure to address both houses of parliament at this first session after the ninth general elections to the House of People [Lok Sabha]. I extend my felicitations to the members of the new Lok Sabha.

The general election just concluded has demonstrated the maturity of the Indian electorate. They have given a clear verdict in favor of change. The government took charge just a fortnight ago and has commenced in right earnest the task of working out details of various policy initiatives and thrusts which it intends to adopt. In this address I am confining myself to the broad issues that the government proposes to tackle.

My government pledges itself to fulfill the mandate given to it by the people. The government will work to restore the dignity of the nation and of the individual. The government proposes to adopt an alternative model of governance and development based on socialist ideals of economic equality and social justice, federalism and decentralization, institutional accountability, and human rights. The government will take steps to establish an inter-state council and to accord constitutional status to the Planning Commission.

My government is committed to a process of national reconciliation and the evolution of consensus to solve the main problems facing the nation. The Punjab problem has defied solution so far. Over the past few years we have witnessed widespread violence. There will be no compromise with separatism, nor yielding to extremists. But there is admittedly a compelling need for a national endeavor to resolve the problem. The government will hold wide-ranging discussions with leaders of cross-sections of the people to evolve a national consensus. A beginning has already been made in the all-party meeting held on the 17th of December 1989. Action on the report of the Ranganathan Mishra of inquiry [on 1984 riots following assassination of Indira Gandhi] will be expeditiously completed.

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir is extremely delicate and fraught with serious implications. There will be no compromise on the country's unity, sovereignty, and integrity. The people of Jammu and Kashmir, who have been second to none in the nation's freedom struggle, will be enabled to play their rightful role in the process of national growth and development. The problems of the people of the state will be gone into in-depth with a view to finding speedy and durable solution.

The Northeast region requires our immediate attention. We are committed to the speedy economic development of this region and for resettlement of the issues which concern the tribal people in the region, including Assam, through dialogue and discussion.

In recent months, the country has witnessed riots and violence arising from sectarian issues. A secular India is a very basis of our emotional unity and national integrity. Violence has no place in the land of Mahatama Gandhi—the apostle of non-violence. The need of the hour is the generation of an atmosphere of amity and goodwill in order to avoid any communal divide. The government seeks the support of the people in its unrelenting effort to promote national unity and integrity. The National Integration Council is being reconstituted and will function as a forum for effective initiatives and interaction on issues of national concern.

A healthy and a vibrant democracy hinges crucially on the sanctity and strength of democratic institutions. The government is fully committed to the restoration of the dignity and vitality of the institutions which have been weakened in recent time. Power flows from the people. It is imperative that the people themselves should have the final say in governing themselves. My government will promote on the basis of national consensus a genuine devolution of powers, functions, and resources to the panchayati raj [village administration] institutions enabling the fullest participation of the people in the development process. It will secure with the cooperation of the state adequate representation in these bodies for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward classes, and women. Indeed, the whole process will be one of strengthening the federal structure of the polity at the center, the state, the district, and the panchayat levels.

A clean public life is the bedrock of democracy. Over the past few years there has been a growing erosion of norms and values in public life. The law will take its own course in regard to matters of corruption in high places. The government will introduce legislation during this session for setting up a lokpal [ombudsman] whose jurisdiction will include the prime minister also. [applause]

My government firmly believes that a participative democracy requires an enlightened and informed electorate. It also believes that an open government functioning in full public view will minimize the possibility of wrongdoing.

The Official Secrets Act will be suitably amended so that the people have increased access to information. Doordarshan [television] and AIR [All India Radio] will be given autonomy to ensure free flow of information. [applause] A bill to this effect will be introduced in this session.

The 59th Amendment to the Constitution, which seriously jeopardized the citizens' right to life, will be repealed. [applause] The postal bill, which sought to interfere with the citizens right to privacy, will be withdrawn. [applause] Similarly, the amendments to the Commissions of Inquiry Act, which sought to permit withholding of vital information from the people and parliament, will be removed from the statute book. [applause]

My government will be amending the Constitution to ensure the citizens' right to information. [applause].

Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes continue to be victims of social and economic injustice. The government's primary aim will be to ensure economic and social justice to them so that they cane live their lives with dignity and honor. The reservation for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the legislatures will be extended by a further period of 10 years. [applause] The government will take appropriate steps to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission [unintelligible shouts; Hindi commentator says "the interruption has been caused by enthusiasm and emotions among new members"] particularly in regard to their demand for one rank-one pension and their forced retirement employment [as heard].

The government will spare no effort to guarantee that minorities live without fear and as an equal partners in the country's progress.

The Constitution provides equal status to men and women. However, women continue to suffer from discrimination and indignity. My government will take all steps to provide equal opportunities for women.

The youth have a special role to play in the progress of the country. Their vast energies will have to be tapped and channeled for the task of nation building. They are the harbingers of change, and it is they who have to lay the foundations of a new and just social order. The government will take steps to facilitate harnessing the youth power for unleashing social forces to transform society.

The educational system will be reformed so that it responds to the needs and aspirations of the new generation. It will be the endeavor of this government to ensure integration of scientific and technological capabilities with our other efforts for national development. Science and technology will be used for increasing agricultural production, developing technologies that will lead to employment generation, for proper utilization of national resources, and for generally benefiting the population at the grass-root level. The government will give priority to the expansion of productive employment opportunities in the economy. We will try to ensure appropriately to all citizens the right to work to enable them to participate in the nation-building programs. [applause]

There are disquieting trends on the economic front. Unbridled government expenditure and consequent increase in money supply and proliferation of the black money have stoked the waves of inflation. The fiscal imbalance has shown up in the form huge budgetary deficit. The balance of payment is under severe strain. The government attaches the highest priority to curbing inflationary pressure. In recent months prices of many essential commodities have risen sharply. They have further impoverished the poor and the underprivileged.

The government intends to tackle the problem of inflation in all possible ways. Deficit financing has reached staggering level. Steps will be taken to reduce wasteful government expenditure. Effective control over government spending and deficit is an essential prerequisite for restoring external and internal stability in our economy. A number of medium-term factors have placed a strain on the balance of payment. Much more needs to be done by way of import management and export growth. The government will formulate an action plan with an aim at correcting the imbalance in our external payments position.

The rise in prices of essential commodities has affected the common man adversely. The public distribution system will be strengthened and closely monitored. Production of articles of common consumption will be encouraged. These steps will ensure that such commodities are within the reach of the vulnerable sections of the society.

Poverty and unemployment continue to confront the nation. Economic disparities have increased in the past few years. All sections of the people have not shared equally the fruits of growth. The government is committed to redress this imbalance and redirect the benefits of development to the poorer sections of the society. The minimum needs program aimed at the poor will be strengthened, and in particular the government will undertake a time-bound program to provide all villages with potable drinking water.

A vast majority of our population lives in the villages. There have been a flight of resources—both human and otherwise—from our rural areas. This trend has to be stopped. [applause] A substantial portion of the government's investment has to be channeled to rural areas. Government's policies will be designed for the poor and the toiling masses. The government will take steps to see that the terms of trade for the agricultural sector are improved and our farmers receive remunerative prices for their produce. [applause] The government will take appropriate steps to provide debt relief for marginal farmers, landless agricultural laborers, artisans, and weavers on loans below rupees 10,000. [applause]

My government will revise the existing laws to bring about equitable distribution of land and other natural resources like water, and make the tiller of the land its owner. [applause] All land reform laws will be included in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution. [applause]

My government will promote industrial development in such a way as to maximize employment. An important role will be assigned and all support given to small-scale industries, the agro-processing industries, and industries based on the craft of rural artisans, as also village industries for particular benefit to women and rural households. The public sector will be streamlined so as to augment the surpluses generated, so that they can be broad-based for future expansion or utilization for developmental activity. Labor participation in management will be made effective to promote the environment of productivity and industrial peace.

In order to prevent the degradation of the environment and consequent erosion of our natural resources base, government will make the preservation of environment a priority area of state policy. Programs for regeneration of biomass will receive fullest interest.

My government's foreign policy is deeply rooted in the ideals and principles which inspired freedom struggle. This is reflected in its firm adherence to nonalignment and our struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, racial discrimination, and all forms of domination and exploitation. The rapidly changing international environment presents both a challenge and opportunity for India, underlining the need for further strengthening of the national consensus.

My government attaches importance to revitalizing and strengthening the ties with our neighbors in South Asia and to imparting fresh dynamism to the process of regional cooperation within the framework of the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation].

The government will spare no efforts to resolve outstanding bilateral issues with our neighboring countries consistent with our national interests. The government will further endeavor to usher in an era of stability, confidence, and cooperative endeavor in our region.

In the pursuit of this objective, talks have already been initiated with the Government of Sri Lanka.

The process of further understanding and cooperation between India and China will be continued by my government. It is hoped that the boundary question can be resolved in a fair, reasonable manner in consonance with our national interests.

My government will further strengthen the traditional friendship with the Soviet Union, build upon new trend of constructive and cooperative relationship with the United States, and strengthen economic cooperation with Japan and the European Community.

My government recognizes the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to achieve a homeland of their own in a peaceful West Asia. The government's support and solidarity to this end will always be there. It will also be my government's endeavor to maintain pressure on the Pretoria regime to commence the early negotiations for the dismantlement of apartheid. The emergence of a united, democratic, and nonracial South Africa is our objective.

Honorable members: The present session is a short one; yet, it is historic in its importance, and is summoned immediately following the constitution of the ninth Lok Sabha in order to place before the parliament the new agenda of work. I wish you all success in your endeavors. Jai Hind [Hail India]. [applause]

Spokesman Denies Arming of Tamil National Army

BK1912155689 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] An External Affairs Ministry spokesman today denied a report which appeared in a section of the press that the Peacekeeping Force [PKF] armed the so-called Tamil National Army, TNA, in Sri Lanka. He said the PKF helped the Sri Lankan Government under an agreement in training and raising up the Citizen's Volunteer Force. The Government of India is not aware of any other groups or anything about the reports or who is arming them, he said.

Nepalese Foreign Minister Invited To Visit

BK1912163389 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] The Nepalese foreign minister, Mr Upadhyaya, has been invited to visit New Delhi to discuss the outstanding issues. The invitation was given by the external affairs minister, Mr I.K. Gujral, when the Nepalese ambassador, Mrs (Bindar Shah), called on him in New Delhi yesterday. Extending the invitation, Mr Gujral said that Mr Upadhyaya can visit at any mutually convenient date. The agenda would be an open one.

Antireservation Violence Reported in 3 States

BK1912161389 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Reports of violence by antireservation activists have come in from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar. Our Bhopal correspondent reports that in Madhya Pradesh, antireservation agitation has spread to some more areas, with students resorting to stone-throwing, blockading the roads, and detaining several trains. At some places, the students attempted to set fire to government property, which was prevented by the police. The state chief minister, Mr S.P. Shukla, has again appealed to the students to shun violence over the issue.

In Uttar Pradesh also, incidents of arson, stone-throwing, and blockade of road and rail services by students were reported from several districts. Our Lucknow correspondent reports that rail services on Allahabad-Kanpur-Delhi main line were badly affected due to the agitation.

In Bihar, train and bus services were adversely affected at various places, following the movement. According to official sources in Patna, police patrolling has been intensified in sensitive areas. Our Patna correspondent reports that educational institutions have been closed before schedule.

CPI Deplores 'Agitation'

BK1812125589 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] The Communist Party of India [CPI] has deplored the anti-reservation agitation in some states and has urged students to abstain. The central secretariat of the party, in a statement issued in New Delhi today, described the stir as misplaced and based on wrong understanding. It says the proposed constitutional amendment is confined to ensuring reservations only in parliament and the state assemblies, and not in public services or educational institutions.

According to the party, as long as social and economic disparities exist, reservations for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are necessary. It also believes that reservation should be extended to members of other backward classes on the basis of their income.

Akali Dal-Mann To Support Government Programs

BK1812150089 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1430 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] The Akali Dal-Mann group has decided to support the National Front government at the center in all its programs for the people. A spokesman of the party, Mr Gurtej Singh, told newsmen in Chandigarh today that this general support can be a (?basis) of finding a solution to the Punjab problem. He said the party MP's [members of parliament] will take their oaths on the 21st of this month, much before the time of vote of confidence.

The spokesman welcomed the all-party meeting held in Delhi on the Punjab issue. He said the pace of normalization in Punjab should be faster.

The Akali Dal-Mann group also demanded an early election of the state assembly and the SGPC [Sikh Temples Management Committee].

Janata Dal Criticizes Congress-I

BK1812161489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] The Janata Dal has criticized the Congress-I for dissociating itself yesterday from the broad consensus arrived at the all-party meeting on Punjab. The party spokesman, Mr Jaipal Reddy, told newsmen in New Delhi today that this was noncooperation exposing the isolation of the party.

Mr Reddy refuted the Congress-I allegation that it was not consulted during the drafting of the consensus statement. He claimed that the Congress-I president, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, was contacted and the draft was sent to him in the early hours of yesterday, much before the all-party meeting began. He said it was also suggested at the meeting that a drafting committee can be formed to prepare the final document, which was also not agreed to by the party.

In reply to a question, Mr Reddy said if the Mann and Badal groups of the Akali Dal had attended the meeting, the consensus would have been more meaningful. But, it does not mean that nothing should be done by other political parties to solve the Punjab problem because they had stayed away, he added.

USSR's Vorontsov To Deliver Gorbachev Message

BK1912125489 Hong Kong AFP in English 1221 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] New Delhi, Dec 19 (AFP)—Soviet First Deputy Premier Yuliy Vorontsov is scheduled to arrive here Thursday or Friday [21-22 December] for a two day visit to discuss bilateral issues with India's new government, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tuesday.

The spokesman said Mr. Vorontsov, acting as a special envoy of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, would be carrying a message from the Soviet leader to Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh.

Mr. Vorontsov's visit follows one by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly, one of the first foreign dignitaries to visit Mr. V.P. Singh since he replaced former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi at the beginning of the month.

Mr. Vorontsov, a former ambassador to New Delhi and Kabul and a close friend of the Gandhi family, is now in charge of the Afghan dossier in Moscow.

4 Contracts Signed for Goods Exports to USSR

BK1712090489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] India has signed four contracts valued at 50 crore rupees with the Soviet Union for export of pharmaceutical goods, sea containers, light industrial equipment, and automobiles. A senior official of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations told a news agency during the ongoing exhibition on industrial and scientific products in Bombay that the Soviet Union will prefer to import equipment for making of tea and expertise in food packaging, coffee, and cold drinks, and plastic bottling technology.

Meanwhile, India's trade with the Soviet Union is expected to rise to 8,800 crore rupees by next year.

Railway Cooperation Protocol Signed With USSR

BK2012043089 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] India and the Soviet Union have signed a protocol for further cooperation in the railway sector. The protocol was signed in New Delhi yesterday by the member of Engineering [Department of] of the Railway Board, Mr Sridharan, and the Soviet deputy minister for railways, Mr V.N. Butko, after the second meeting of the India-Soviet Joint Working Group on the Railways. Mr Butko is leading a five-member delegation at the meeting.

Earlier, Mr Butko called on the railway minister, Mr C. George Fernandes.

New Minister of State for Science, Technology

BK1812054989 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0435 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Professor M.G.K. Menon has been inducted into the union Council of Ministers as a minister of state. The president, Mr R. Venkataraman, administered the oath of office and secrecy to the noted scientist at a simple function held in Rashtrapati Bhavan [President House] a short while ago. The prime minister, Mr V.P. Singh, and other leaders were present.

Our correspondent reports that the induction of the scientist in the ministry reflects the prime minister's desire to give a major thrust to the development of science and technology, which is now under his charge. Our correspondent says that Professor Menon will look after the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Iran

Voters Expect Majles To Remove 'Bottlenecks'

LD1512165989 Tehran IRNA in English 1501 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 15, IRNA—Voting period in five constituencies including Tehran is extended by two hours due to heavy turnout of the voters in the Majles by-elections, announced the Interior Ministry here Friday evening.

The elections started at 07:00 am (03:30 GMT) in which the voters are to elect nine deputies out of the total of 64 nominees running in the elections, four for Tehran, to fill in the vacant seats in the Majles.

Polls will remain open to the voters up to 19:00 hours (15:30 GMT) in Tehran, Karaj, Eshtehard, Kerman and Kashan, instead of the scheduled 17:00 hours.

President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani cast his vote Friday morning. In a brief interview he expressed the hope that the people will continue to maintain their intense interest in the affairs of the country.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdollah Nuri visited several voting stations in southern Tehran. He also visited the holy shrine of the late Imam Khomeyni and paid homage to the founder of the Islamic revolution of Iran.

First Vice-President Hasan Habibi cast his vote in a polling booth in southern Tehran this morning.

Most voters interviewed by IRNA considered participation in the by-elections as a religious duty. They also said they expect the Majles deputies to follow the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i and to try to remove economic bottlenecks facing the society.

The supervising boards of the by-elections in a statement said that all the incoming complaints will be studied in the constituencies.

Romania's Ceausescu, Delegation Continue Visit

Meets With Roghani-Zanjani

LD1912180889 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] During this afternoon's meeting between Roghani-Zanjani, vice president and director of the Plan and Budget Organization, and Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu, grounds for economic, technical, and technological cooperations between the two countries were reviewed. At the meeting, which took place in Ceausescu's residence, and which was also attended by Deputy Romanian Prime Minister Ion Radu, as well as the Romanian head of the two countries' joint commission, Roghani-Zanjani announced the grounds for bilateral cooperation in agreed fields, such as the export of oil and gas to Romania, as well as joint investments in the industrial and mining fields, in particular in lead, zinc, and copper. He also described Iran's agreement for technological cooperation as well as other long-term economic and technical cooperation.

Then Ceausescu announced his country's readiness for extensive cooperation with Iran in all fields. He added: Both countries have suitable forces at their disposal which are able to perform important roles in all aspects. [as heard] He then reiterated that there are numerous grounds for bilateral industrial cooperation. Through our joint ventures, and with the use of a suitable and competitive technological framework, we can export our joint products to other countries. At the end of that meeting, Roghani-Zanjani noted the emphasis placed by both countries' high-ranking officials to hasten the pace of implementing the agreements reached.

Meets Prime Minister Velayati

LD1912183289 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GSMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] IRNA reports that Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu in his meeting this afternoon with Foreign Minister Velayati, stressed: We seek the return of the

Iraqi forces to international borders, and the implementation of the resolution starts from that point.

In the meeting, which took place at Ceausescu's residence, the Romanian president stressed the importance of bilateral relations. He stated: The two countries can have good cooperation in various fields, including international cooperation. He then referred to the implementation of Security Council Resolution 598, and added: In view of our future presence in the Security Council, we will do our utmost to see that this resolution is implemented.

Then Velayati stated: We have a solid document in hand in that connection, that document is the 1975 Algeria treaty. Iraq has no choice but to observe the provisions of that treaty.

Joint Economic Commission Meets

LD1912182589 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] The second session of the 7th meeting of the Iran-Romania Joint Economic Commission was convened this afternoon in the presence of Ion Radu, Romanian deputy prime minister, and Roghani-Zanjani, vice president and director of the Plan and Budget Organization.

In that meeting, both parties approved of the agreements reached in recent talks between the two countries. They further stressed the need to continue the negotiations to final results, which must be noted in the joint protocol of bilateral cooperation. According to IRNA's report, Zanjani, the Iranian head of the joint commission, expressed satisfaction with Iran and Romania's useful achievements in the fields of oil, gas, mining, and industry. He further mentioned cooperation aimed at the construction of a cement manufacturing factory as well as the purchase of wheat from Romania. He then stressed the need to set up a special account and use the buy-back method in bilateral exchanges. He also seeks both countries' seriousness in these matters.

Ion Radu, in turn, described the negotiations in Tehran as very fruitful. He said that relations between Iran and Romania will be expanded further in the future, on the basis of important negotiations that have taken place between the two countries' presidents.

Furthermore, both sides agreed that in future negotiations, the practical problems of the buy-back method in bilateral exchanges should be resolved.

Romania's Radu Meets Zanganeh

NC2012074389 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] Romanian Deputy Prime Minister Ion Radu, who is currently in Tehran, has met with Energy Minister Zanganeh at the ministry premises. According to our correspondent, during this meeting issues pertaining to bilateral cooperation, especially in the fields of dam construction and energy, were discussed, including laying electricity lines. The two parties also agreed that a team of experts should visit Romania in the future in order to boost this cooperation further.

Karrubi Condemns UK Detention of Students

LD1912222989 Tehran IRNA in English 1846 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 19, IRNA—Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam Mehdi Karrubi today condemned the illegal detention of four Iranian students in Manchester on Friday by British Police, following the massive demonstration by British Muslims against 'The Satanic Verses'.

Karrubi told an open session of the Majles "Britain should know that as long as it refuses to change its stance and hampers justice where Islam and Muslims concerned not by apologizing to them the wave of demonstrations will escalate."

The students were arrested and detained by the British police on alleged charges of plans to execute apostate author Salman Rushdie, on the 'Day of Solidarity' held by UK Muslims in over 1000 mosques.

The Iranian students were beaten by police, which after initial denials of arrest released two of the detainees Tuesday.

Meanwhile a group of Majles deputies has asked the Foreign Ministry to take appropriate actions in order to safeguard the life of students in Britain and to secure their release. They condemned the British police's repressive action.

Commentary Views UK Position on Relations

NC1212223889 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1750 GMT 12 Dec 89

[Station commentary]

[Text] For the second time in the past 2 weeks, the UK foreign secretary has officially said that his government seeks to establish better ties with Iran. Douglas Hurd purposely dropped any mention of previous UK conditions for restoring London-Tehran ties. Among these conditions were that Tehran withdraw the ruling on the death sentence for the author of "The Satanic Verses" and that the British spy held in Tehran, Roger Cooper, be released.

Two weeks ago, the UK foreign secretary officially announced his country's desire to improve ties with Iran and his hope for the release of UK hostages in Lebanon.

Douglas Hurd wrote in a message to the brother of Terry Waite, the UK hostage held in Lebanon, saying that the UK Government hopes to establish good ties with Iran and that London is not prepared to interfere in Tehran's affairs and is looking forward to ties based on equality and reciprocity with Iran.

UK papers described the omission of London's previous conditions as a flagrant concession to Iran. The UK minister mentioned for the first time in his message that he is concerned over the situation of the three Iranians who have been held since 1982, and who, he said, may sadly have been killed by now. He got their number wrong. There are actually four, not three.

Some political quarters in London say that the repeated official expression of London's wish to restore its ties with Iran is intended to relieve the political pressure of UK public opinion on the government.

Approximately a month ago, a 25-minute documentary was shown on commercial British television. The documentary said that of all European countries, the UK's performance on the hostage issue has been singularly miserable. The documentary sourly criticized the government's reluctance to hold talks to seek the hostages' freedom. The documentary says that resuming ties with Iran could be the clue to resolving that issue.

Furthermore, when Douglas Hurd said that London is eager to restore ties with Tehran, he was described by UK papers as a prudent and brave politician who, unlike his predecessors, is capable of making bold moves.

It is interesting in this regard to note how anti-Iranian articles in UK press have dwindled in number, which has been true for the past 4 months. It seems that the UK foreign office has instructed the press not to provoke Islamic public opinion in Britain. The UK Government is suffering from a political and social crisis in its dealings with the 2 million Muslims living in Britain. This crisis is hard to resolve, for UK Muslims feel alienated by the UK Government. These Muslims have also found themselves at odds with UK policy following the death sentence on the apostate Salman Rushdie.

This continued situation, coupled with the spread of true Mohammedan Islam in Britain among Muslim youth there, as many of these youths turn their backs on western-style Islam and rid themselves of the traditional Saudi influence, causes much consternation in London.

These developments prove that the choice of decisive and principled confrontation is the only way to dissuade westerners from infringing upon Islamic sanctities and to force them to go back on their most intransigent stands. These stands include those that Britain and a number of western countries took against the Islamic Republic following the initial confrontation created by the ruling of the late Imam Khomeyni, may Allah bless his soul, in connection with the conspiracy of "The Satanic Verses." While the Islamic Republic stood firm in its struggling stand, the West was quick to reverse its positions and admit another defeat.

UN Mission Denies Report of Oil Sale to Israel

LD2012104489 Tehran IRNA in English 0605 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] United Nations, Dec. IRNA—Iranian mission here Tuesday categorically denied a report that the Islamic Republic of Iran has sold oil to the Zionist regime.

The American television network NBC Monday evening aired a report claiming that the Zionist regime has purchased oil from Iran with the aim of speeding up release of American hostages.

The Iranian permanent mission to the United Nations in a statement Tuesday stressed that such baseless reports were attempts to distort the revolutionary image of the Islamic Republic of Iran before the world Muslim nations.

The statement added that Iran severed all diplomatic and economic ties with the Zionist regime after the victory of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran does not recognise the Zionist entity and, in support of the just struggle of the Palestinian people, it has adopted every measure conceivable to prevent any action which, directly or indirectly, would help strengthen the Zionist entity," said the statement.

It further pointed out that Iran as a basic requirement for sale of oil demands discharge certificates from purchasers of its oil. This is to ensure that no oil is shipped neither to the Zionist regime nor to South Africa, it said adding, "such discharge certificates are available upon request."

Iran Demands Israel's Expulsion From Postal Union

LD1512143789 Tehran IRNA in English 1350 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] Washington, Dec. 15, IRNA—The Islamic Republic of Iran called for expulsion of the Zionist regime from the Universal Postal Union (UPU) here Thursday [14 December].

The proposal was put forward by head of the Iranian delegation Minister of Post, Telephone and Telegraph Mohammad Gharazi in the ongoing 20th congress of the UPU, opened here with participation of representatives from member countries in mid-November.

Although the proposal was welcomed by many of the participants in the congress, it was turned down on the grounds that in accordance with the regulations of the UPU it had to be submitted six months in advance of the congress.

In the Thursday session of the UPU Congress, Gharazi, in a statement called for replacement of the Zionist regime delegation with one representing the Palestinian people. The statement also criticized the brutal attitude and oppressive measures of the Zionist regime against the Palestinian nation.

The 40-day long congress, is held every five years.

Commentary Views Muslim Demonstrations in Egypt

NC1312214489 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 13 Dec 89

[From the "Behind the News" program]

[Text] Now we move on to Cairo, where Egyptian security forces arrested 300 Muslim Egyptians in Asyut last Monday for taking part in a demonstration which Zaki Badr, the interior minister of the Egyptian regime, said turned into a confrontation between the security forces and the demonstrators.

The demonstrators, who are college students, were protesting excursions organized by Asyut University that include certain features conflicting with Islamic ethics, such as vulgar music and sports involving both sexes.

Our fourth and last report takes a look at that news:

The Egyptian regime's arrest of peaceful Islamists demonstrating in Asyut is another step indicating the Egyptian authorities' escalation of their ugly campaign against the Egyptian people.

These authorities are tirelessly smothering the opinions of the Islamists and arresting people for the slightest suspicion of Islamic inclination.

Since Zaki Badr, a man known for his loathing of the Islamic movement, took office, tens of thousands of Muslim Egyptians have been arrested and many armed operations carried out against Islamic elements. In an interview with the magazine AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, Zaki Badr once vowed to use every possible means, including illegal ones, to stamp out the Islamic movement in Egypt.

It seems that the bestial attacks by the Egyptian authorities against the Islamic current in Egypt complement the Egyptian role which Mubarak and his regime have taken up on orders from their masters. This role is not confined merely to Egypt, but has bearing on the entire Arab region.

Observers of recent developments in the Arab and Islamic region can easily perceive that some hands are working behind the scenes to give the Egyptian regime a good image and grant it a leading role in the official Arab scene. This trend was particularly evident in the steps made to bring Camp David into the Arab mainstream and restore Mubarak's regime to the Arab fold. Egypt's once ostensibly severed ties with certain Arab countries were reestablished following summits and other meetings among the Arabs.

The current role of the Egyptian regime regarding the Palestinian issue and its participation in the Arab Cooperation Council sheds some light on the mission assigned to that regime in supporting imperialist schemes and facilitating their acceptance by the Muslims in general and the Arabs in particular, a task which the Saudi regime has found daunting for reasons having to do with its own nature as well as because of other regional considerations.

Pro-Intifadah Demonstrations in Jordan Viewed

NC1312200989 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 13 Dec 89

[From the "Behind the News" program]

[Text] Our dear listners, we have more news for you concerning the Islamic intifadah. There are reports the Arabs in Tunis, Jordan, and elsewhere are continuing their popular demonstrations in support of the Islamic intifadah and its continuation on the intifadah's second anniversary.

In Jordan, authorities have intervened to prevent a demonstration by the Jordanian masses from reaching the U.S. Embassy. The demonstrators were chanting anti-American slogans. Other sources, however, said the demonstration continued its march toward the embassy, where the demonstrators burned the U.S. flag in front of it. Our third report in this program sheds light on that event:

Popular demonstrations in support of the Islamic intifadah continue to be staged in Jordan, Tunisia, Egypt, and other countries. This is a mark of the deepening gulf between the Arab masses and their reactionary regimes over what concerns the Palestinian issue.

The continuation of demonstrations underlines the popular rejection of the international and regional schemes and plans that intend to liquidate the Palestinian issue. Reactionary regimes currently are attempting to peddle such schemes and earn them the support of Islamic and Arab public opinion. Such schemes and plans intend to end the Palestinian issue and recognize the de facto presence of the Zionist enemy in the land of Palestine.

Those demonstrations constitute just another sign of popular rejection. A previous sign of that rejection was manifested in the operations of Jihad and martyrdom [al-'amaliyat al-jihadiyah al-stishhadiyah], which were carried out by heroic Jordanian and Egyptian soldiers and Palestinian mujahidin, who crossed the Jordanian and Egyptian borders with the occupied land and infiltrated the depth of the Zionist lines to fight the enemy while chanting God is great.

This means popular awareness is on the rise. It is not unlikely the popular rejection will go a step further and assume another form with wider proportions than peaceful demonstrations. The growing popular opposition of capitulationist plans will increase the embarrassment of reactionary regimes in Islamic public opinion, for these regimes were trying to dull the senses of their nations into accepting the imperialist plans, particularly as concerned the liquidation of the Palestinian issue.

It is not unlikely then, if the current rejection takes further hold, that such regimes would find themselves forced to retreat or at least consider any future step. For if such regimes continue their treason, they will find themselves standing alone in the face of popular resistance and anger.

The popular demonstrations, furthermore, reflect the strong rapport between the Islamic nations and the Palestinian people. The Muslim masses are showing the extent of their interest in the intifadah and its development and of their support to it and its continued resistance to the usurping enemy. This support in its turn reflects on the intifadah itself. It certainly reinforces the confidence of the Palestinian masses and increases their resolve to continue the struggle against the enemy. The struggling Palestinian people know they are not alone on the battlefield, for they have the strategic and popular support of the Islamic nations.

Tehran on EEC Rejection of Turkish Membership

NC1512110189 Tehran International Service in Turkish 1700 GMT 12 Dec 89

[Unattributed commentary: "Rejection of Turkey's Application for EEC Membership"]

[Text] At a meeting in Strasbourg, France, the EEC turned down Turkey's application for membership. After studying the matter, the EEC Commission disclosed Turkey cannot be accepted as a member for religious, social, and cultural reasons.

Turkey is facing various economic problems, such as a high inflation rate, a budget deficit, a continuous fall in the value of the Turkish lira, and astronomical debts. Wanting to overcome its existing crisis, Turkey officially applied for EEC membership in 1987. The EEC, however, thus far has not agreed to Turkey's membership for various reasons, among which are Turkey's economic crisis, the violation of human rights, and social, economic, and cultural differences between Turkey and the EEC countries. Meanwhile, it should be recalled that as a member of NATO, Turkey has allowed that military pact to establish many bases on its territory. Furthermore, it did not hesitate to sacrifice its economy in favor of its military structure.

The question of becoming an EEC member was debated continuously in Turkey and opposition to entering the EEC was expressed. According to those who rejected membership in the EEC, Turkey's social, economic, and cultural structure does not fit in with such structures in European countries. Turkey's inclusion in the EEC therefore may have undesirable results.

Economic development and progress naturally takes place according to each country's religious, social, economic, and cultural dynamics. Observers believe that had Turkey entered the EEC at the expense of inflicting a blow on local industry and economic development, it would not have been able to compete with the EEC countries in the field of manufactured products, which forms the economic basis of the EEC countries. In view of this, it seems essential officials in Turkey should focus attention more on increasing Turkey's economic strength than on pressing for EEC membership. This is because EEC membership can be useful only if the country in question has a strong economy. Greece and Portugal can be taken as examples. Despite their EEC membership, the two countries are experiencing significant economic crises.

The general view meanwhile is that Turkey has many aspects in common with Islamic countries in the social, economic, and cultural fields. This state of affairs can create favorable conditions for Turkish cooperation at high levels with Islamic countries. Through harmony with Islamic countries, Turkey can resolve many of the economic problems it believes it can settle by entering the EEC. It must be pointed out, however, that statistics indicate the volume of Turkey's trade with Islamic countries has decreased during the last few years.

In view of all this, a move by Turkey to choose a wise direction for itself will serve its own interests from various aspects.

Larijani Comments on Turkish-Pakistani Maneuvers

NC1312134789 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 7 Dec 89 p 16

["Weekly political newsletter" by Dr Mohammad Javad Larijani]

[Text] 1. The second joint Turkish-Pakistani naval maneuvers were conduct last week in the Gulf of Oman. There seems to be no military signifcance to the maneuvers, but they appear important from a political and regional standpoint.

Turkey for years has been aspiring to membership in the EEC and regarding this, has endured much humiliation and contempt. Every day it writes out new prescriptions for this purpose: Western values should be respected in Turkey! Social norms of Western society must be popularized! Religious prejudices must be eliminated...and so on. There is no sign yet, however, of its being awarded membership.

2. The prospect of Turkey's acceptance to the EEC does not appear very hopeful, and the latest developments have greatly reduced the EEC's need for geographical expansion. It is possible the Turkish political echelons are unhappy with this situation, but Turkey should not expect vast possibilities in its European relations. Turkey's real friends are in the East. In only three of the Islamic countries—Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan—there

are more than 200 million Muslim nationals with such immense possibilities in the fields of energy, mines, agriculture, and efficient and specialized manpower that they can form the nucleus of an Islamic commonwealth.

To lobby for membership in the European commonwealth, Turkey has been forced to distance itself from the pure Islamic culture, and this has created a fissure between the Turkish Government and the nation. By forging closer ties with its Muslim neighbors and friends, Turkey can gain not only access to abundant economic resources, but also can consolidate the bases of its government.

3. One of the outcomes today of the changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is that political theories that rely on brainwashing people and replacing their culture and political beliefs cannot succeed. The faith and belief of people should not be considered a commodity that can be bartered or changed at will to suit the exigencies of the moment.

The strongest government is that which has deep roots in the culture and beliefs of the nation. Turkey has experimented for years with distancing itself from the culture of pure Islam and today, the best "perestroika" for it would be to liberate itself from the bondage of opposing religion and morals.

If the Europeans playing "hard to get" with Turkey's membership in the EEC, its powerful brothers always are waiting to welcome it with open arms for closer and extensive cooperation.

In my opinion, joint maneuvers in the future should be conducted between Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey on land, sea and air.

Commentary: GCC Summit 'Decisive' on Peace

NC1812192789 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Dec 89

[From "Behind the News" program]

[Text] The 10th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] leaders has opened in Muscat. The summit's agenda involves the GCC's internal and foreign policies. The implementation of Resolution 598 and the relationship with the Islamic Republic are priority items on the agenda. We review this event in this report:

The 10th summit of the GCC has opened in Muscat under the chairmanship of Sultan Qabus Ibn-Sa'id of Oman. A number of issues have been included on the summit agenda, but priority has been given to the GCC countries' relations with the Islamic Republic and their stand on the existing state of no war no peace, caused by Iraq's refusal to implement Resolution 598 and its desire to uphold an atmosphere of silence that would not criticize its negative stand that threatens to subject the region to danger at any moment.

Although there are a number of local, Arab, and international issues that need to be discussed and need decisions made on them, adopting a stand on the situation between the Islamic Republic and Iraq seems a difficult one. There is the Saudi stand, which stems from hostile motives. It wants to impose itself on the GCC countries so the stand they take will not budge the existing situation in the region toward peace. Iraq needs this stand very desperately, because its obstacles and its prevarication in implementing the UN resolution do not depend on a responsible and strong stand that can be easily justified. But the majority of the GCC countries—which are maintaining good relations with the Islamic Republic—clearly see the Iraqi stand is not helping peace and stability in the region and that Iraq gradually will steer its forces toward the small Gulf countries, particularly after its announcement about developing its missile capabilities.

If the search for peace requires the adoption of a delicate stand, then continuing the prevarication and only voicing a desire to implement the resolution will not serve the cause of peace. Improving relations with the Islamic Republic moreover requires a clear stand toward it, since it is evident to everyone the latter is eager to have constructive ties at all levels, particularly political and economic ones.

The war ended more than 18 months ago, but today it is registering a unique presence on the Muscat summit agenda. The Gulf states' rulers—who have experienced the development of events in the region—possibly are fully aware of the consequences of their stands on the overall situation in the region at the political, security, and economic levels. The Islamic Republic's proposals for self-security in the Gulf, constant cooperation, and the provision of a permanent atmosphere of peace thus appear to be nearer to the Gulf states' leaders than the Iraqi regime's calls, which want to keep the region subject to contingencies and surprises. The Iraqi regime wants to exercise a regional role by exploiting the state of instability, the most prominent feature of which is the state of no war no peace.

The GCC summit thus is a decisive and fateful one regarding establishment of the nature of the Gulf position on the fateful and sensitive issues under discussion, though observers and experts in the affairs of the region do not expect a departure from the normal Gulf stand, which is a conciliatory one greatly influenced by factors of strength and geography.

KEYHAN Discusses OPEC Outlook in Nineties

NC1112140089 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 29 Nov 89 p 20

[Heshmatollah Razavi commentary: "OPEC and the Outlook for the Nineties"]

[Excerpts] The 86th OPEC session ended yesterday after setting an output target of 22 milion barrels a day and deciding to maintain the price at $18 a barrel. During their Vienna meeting, the petroleum ministers of the 13 OPEC nations ended a decade of crisis (the decade of the 1980's) and started a new era in the world oil market. During this "new era" developments in the oil market in the 1990's are expected to be completely different from those in the 1980's. Also a relative stability in world oil markets is also expected. [passage omitted]

The OPEC members depend on their oil incomes now more than ever. The debts of the OPEC nations amount to more than $200 billion. Indonesia, Algeria, Nigeria, and Venezuela need their oil income to repay their debts; Iraq needs its oil income to repay its debts and for reconstruction because of damages it has suffered from its aggressive war; the Arab countries in the southern part of the Persian Gulf need their income to free themselves from stagnation; and Iran needs its oil income for reconstruction of damages incurred by the imposed war and for its economic development. And all these are elements that encourage compromise and understanding among the 13 OPEC members. Thus, we can expect relative stability in the world oil market as well as the consolidation and unity of OPEC, at least in the first half of the 1990's. Moreover, international and regional detente also increase the possibilities of this stability. But despite these forecasts, the possibility of an incident that may upset the stabiity in the world oil market—an incident like the Egyptian-Israeli war in 1973 and the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979—always exists.

TEHRAN TIMES Calls For Detente in OPEC

NC1612192889 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 10 Dec 89 p 2

[Editorial: "OPEC Needs Detente"]

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani briefed the members of Parliament (Islamic Consultative Assembly or Majles) in a rather non-official meeting here last Monday on his government's economic policies as planned in the Five-Year Plan for the nation's socio-economic uplift.

The Majles, however, will take up the plan for a thorough scrutiny and possible ratification in a few days time.

The plan has been a topic of heated discussion in recent weeks in many a politico-economic circle. It may be gleaned from what has been said by those who have taken issue with the plan. At least one political grouping inside the Majles considers it a very ambitious plan. In other words, this wing thinks the government's $112 billion foreign exchange earning target is rather outstretched and unrealistic. The advocates of this view hold the fulfillment of the plan in doubt. Oil and oil-related revenues, they believe, have been too ambitiously planned.

In that very meet last week the president took up every single criticism of this kind for a detailed discussion.

It should, however, be granted that Iran's oil revenues have been, as it naturally should, given an axial role in shaping up and giving direction to national economy and planning. Will the country be able to lay its hands on the same amount of oil revenues the economic planners have presaged?

To achieve this, it seems the government will have to promote exportation of oil products through each and every decent way there is. One good start will be the substitution of the 750,000 barrels of oil consumed domestically with natural gas. By doing so the government will be able to increase the national capacity for oil exports to the same proportion. The country should also upgrade its export facilities and maintain a high export capacity to avoid a serious slack in this connection in the years to come. Maintaining a high export capacity is, indeed, a positive parameter that can help in assigning bigger quotas to Iran by the OPEC. But an even more significant parameter in this connection concerns the OPEC bench mark price. It can be readily admitted that the bench price has never been based on mere economic realities. A large part of the decisions made in the last decade to determine the bench price has been quite political, rather than economic. The OPEC's interpolitics and tensions have always had a direct bearing on price-related issues.

Now that Rafsanjani's government is seriously involved in making the five year national plan, it seems only apt that Iran also propose a tension reducing plan (detente) for OPEC and earnestly follow it up.

Every single petro-dollar that is lost because of international joustings in OPEC is, indeed, a loss to all the 13 member countries. Any drop in oil revenues is certainly a hamper to economic plannings and will arrest or adversely affect national development in all the member nations. Detente for OPEC is in order and is a must to keep the prices stable.

President Chairs Anti-Narcotics Agency Meeting

LD1512135989 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] The governor of Sistan Va Baluchestan presented a report to the Headquarters for Combatting Narcotics meeting on the successful destruction of locations in the province connected with smuggling and corrupt deeds.

According to the Central News Unit, in this meeting, which was chaired by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the project for merging [tamarkos] the border villages of Sistan va Baluchestan in several points was examined and passed, and plans were adopted for securing healthy living conditions and welfare for the villagers of these regions.

In this meeting 500 million rials was allocated from the headquarter's funds to continue combating narcotics in that deprived province. According to the report, in this meeting implementation rules and regulations concerning the sale of confiscated properties pertaining to the law on combating narcotics, approved by the Expediency Discernment Council, were reviewed and passed. According to this law, income derived from the sale of these properties should be used for combating narcotics trafficking.

In this meeting, Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani, chairman of the Headquarters for Combatting Narcotics, referring to the global dimensions of the crucial matter of combating narcotics, emphasized the need for active participation by the Islamic Republic in international forums and described the achievements of the Islamic Republic in combatting international traffickers and networks.

Maneuvers Net Narcotics Smugglers, Drugs

LD1612205889 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] As part of the "Val-'Adiat-3" maneuvers, the "Al-Hadid-2" operations against smugglers and insurgents were staged successfuly in two phases in Systan va Baluchestan and Kerman Provinces by the Islamic revolution committees.

Mr Za'eri, the Islamic Revolution Committee deputy in charge of security and operations, this morning explained the way the operations were staged. He said: With very good coordination between the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, Gendarmerie, and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Air Force, the "Al-Hadid-2" operations in Systan va Baluchestan Province began on 3 December for 4 days, and Kerman Province from 10 December for 3 days. They ended after inflicting loss of life to the merchants of death, the destruction of vehicles and munitions. During operations, a number of narcotics smugglers were arrested and many forced to flee. The two regions now are clear of these smugglers and insurgents.

Mr Za'eri also described the local people's cooperation as very useful. He also announced results of the "Val-'Adiat-3" maneuvers: the arrest of 4,789 addicts, 972 narcotics smugglers, and the discovery of 1,505 kilograms of various narcotics. He recalled the narcotics headquarters has arrested 75,238 narcotics smugglers and addicts within the last 8 months, and has discovered 225,965 kilograms of various kinds of narcotics.

Majles Continues Discussion of Draft Bills

LD1712150389 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] Today's open session of the Majles, chaired by Mr Karrubi, discussed the legal draft on setting up offices where Majles deputies can be contacted by the people. It also discussed the legal draft on ways to implement Article 85 and 138 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran—which concern the responsibilities of the Majles speaker—and the legal draft on ways to deal with judicial issues concerning Majles deputies and appeals for the hearing of those rejected by the Council of Guardians, in the Expediency Discernment Council. Amendments to all three drafts were ratified.

The deputies also continued their discussion of the draft bill on the Islamic Republic's first economic social, and cultural plan, and the deputies' proposals regarding two additional clauses were debated. Some were ratified.

Report on 13 December Cabinet Meeting

NC1412065489 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 14 Dec 89

[Text] The cabinet met yesterday with President Hashemi-Rafsanjani presiding. During the meeting, reports by the cabinet's bills and economy committees were discussed and several proposals by executive organs were approved.

Majles Official Interviewed on 5-Year Plan

NC1212082989 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 12 Dec 89

[Interview with Alviri, head of the Plan and Budget Commission of the Majles, by correspondent Ja'fari; date and place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Alviri] The plan and budget commission of the Majles has paid particular attention to three or four issues in the 5-year plan, which envisages measures to resolve these problems.

One issue is that of social justice. The 5-year plan envisages several measures aimed at establishing social justice, the most important of which is reducing borrowing from the Central Bank. The budget deficit causes inflation, which exacerbates the gaps between the various strata and exerts pressure on lower income groups. Fortunately, a clause on this has been approved by the Majles' second session and it is hoped that deficit will be reduced to zero.

Another measure aimed at achieving social justice is to pay immediate attention to the deprived stratum. This clause has been approved in the Majles and this stratum will be given greater facilities in the areas of education, health, rural road construction, electrification, and employment so that their deprivation is eliminated in the course of these 5 years and people in the deprived areas can reach the same level as people in other areas which are not deprived. These are the basic steps for achieving social justice.

Another area we are stressing is the production sector. The 5-year plan calls for an 8-percent annual growth rate in the gross domestic product.

We also considered and emphasized the issue of economic independence. In the 5-year plan, we are endeavoring to reduce dependence on oil. In our rial budget we have striven to increase revenues and other sources of income so that we can reduce our dependence on oil. We are to boost nonoil exports in our foreign exchange budget as well, thus reducing the share of oil.

Another issue is that of employment. The 5-year plan envisages the creation of approximately 400,000 new jobs, or 394,000 to be more precise, per year. Over the past 10 years, an average of 190,000 new jobs were created each year, but this figure will increase significantly under the plan and approach 400,000. The fields where these new jobs will be created will also change as we are shifting the emphasis toward production, while the share of the service sector will be decreased under the plan.

These are the fundamental measures which have been envisaged in the plan and, God willing, if we proceed with a national determination and with many-sided efforts, we will certainly perceive a change in the country's economy.

[Ja'fari] Thank you very much.

Aghajari Gas Refinery Becomes Operational

NC1612112189 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] The rennovation and reconstruction of the third phase of Aghajari's Bid Boland Gas Refinery has ended, and the refinery can now operate. This was stated by the head of Area One of the National Iranian Gas Company yesterday. He stated that the reconstruction of all National Iranian Gas Company installations in Khuzestan that had been damaged in the imposed war has been completed and that these units are ready to operate. He said that 60 percent of the building and technical installations of the refinery had been damaged. But 4 months after the establishment of the cease-fire, expert forces began to carry out reconstruction and rennovation activities and make it operational. The reconstruction of its third phase also ended during the past few days, and this phase will become operational soon.

He also said that the Bid Boland Gas Refinery has four units, three of which are operating now and supply 8 million cubic meters of gas to the national pipeline.

In conclusion he stated that by the end of 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993] all the residents in Ahvaz, Behbahan, Ramhormoz, Ramshir, Aghajari, Shadegan, Mahshahr, Shushtar, Shush, Baghmalek, Dezful, and Izeh will be able to receive gas from the gas distribution network.

Editorial Stresses Need To Strengthen Defense

NC0812202989 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 26 Nov 89 pp 1, 3

[Editorial: "'Mobilization': Love for Friend; Rage for Enemy"]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] Mobilization Week is the week in which we commemorate the Basijis, each one of whom was and is a Kaveh [mythical figure who led the Persians against a tyrant king] and played a role in the uprising against the blasphemy and discord that rose to fight Islam and our nation. [passage omitted]

Today the U.S. Government and those serving it are not afraid of communism or the communist movement. What they fear, first and foremost, is the independence- and justice-seeking Islamic movements and, second, the national and popular movements, because such movements also can guide the ship of revolution out of tempests with religious beliefs.

This is why neither the threat of their temptations nor the vulnerability of the expansionist Iraqi regime vis-a-vis such temptations has been removed. Under such circumstances, therefore, logic demands our nation add to its strength, resistance, and alertness. As the leader of the revolution has said, a nation unable to defend itself cannot continue to exist.

The heads of the U.S. and British Governments and, generally speaking, the capitalists ruling the West on the one hand and the dependent Arabic and non-Arabic regimes on the other, are tempting and instigating the Iraqi Ba'thists and frightening them about the questions the Iraqi people may ask. We thus have no alternative but to strengthen and equip further our nation's military and defense forces parallel with our efforts through political and international channels.

Editorial Views Role of Mobilization Corps

NC0712135489 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 25 Nov 89 pp 1, 3

[Editorial: "The Strengthening of the 'Mobilization' Corps: A Guarantee for Peace"]

[Excerpts] The commemoration of the anniversary of the "Mobilization for the Oppressed" on the orders of Imam Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified, is taking place at a time when the Iraqi regime is unfortunately, very impudently and blatantly, announcing the death of the 1975 [Algiers] agreement! [passage omitted]

Now that Iran has accepted the Security Council resolution in order to achieve a just, lasting, and guaranteed peace and has repeatedly announced its readiness to implement each and every article of the resolution exactly in the order that they appear in the resolution, it is clear that Iran does not want war because it is not a warmongerer. But this very government and nation are the very government and nation that stole the sleep from the eyes of world-devouring rulers at various junctures and stood up in front of them with all their might. We have learned from Islam and from our numerous experiences that weakness does not bring peace. It is both moral and material strength that brings peace, as does a strength which is in the hands of peace-seekers.

...Our basijis are ready. Apparently the Iraqi regime interprets the Islamic Republic's defense for peace, stability, and justice as a weakness and incapability! But it is better for the Iraqi regime to remember that these people and these basijis are the same people whom the Iraqi regime and its encouragers and mentors thought to be weak and incapable of defense in 1980!

It was by entertaining such thoughts and such assumptions that the heads of the Iraqi regime were fooled and held on the rotten rope of others, only to fall into a pit and then to start begging to be pulled out and to be saved from death.

These people are the same people, these basijis are the same basijis, these corpsmen are the same corpsmen, and these soldiers are the same soldiers who in the years 1359, 1360, and 1361 [1980, 1981, and 1982] not only drove the equipped Iraqi Army to the other side of Khorramshahr, but who expelled domestic subversive people and groups whose efforts to weaken and to sow discord were supported by Iraq out of the country like the Iraqi Ba'thists. Is it not to the benefit of Iraq and the Iraqi Government and nation not to attempt a similar act and to hang on the same rotten rope of false expectations only to fall into the same pit once again? At any rate, our basijis, soldiers, and corpsmen will do what they have to do. In other words, they will increase their readiness and their general strength in order to defend the country and to confront anything that may come up. The more the Mobilization Corps is strengthened, the more a future just and lasting peace will be guaranteed.

*Mariyam Behruzi on Women's Rights in Islam

90OI0084A Tehran RESALAT in Persian
2 Dec 89 p 4

[Text] We are on the eve of the birth anniversary of Her Holiness Zeynab Kobra (peace be upon her).

Without a doubt Her Holiness Zeynab Kobra (peace be upon her) is the true model for a Muslim and revolutionary woman. For the occasion, we will portray the image of an Iranian Muslim woman after the revolution. We will also settle misgivings concerning the issues of women in Iran. We therefore direct your attention to a talk by Ms Mariyam Behruzi given on behalf of the women of Iran at a meeting of the Union of Parliament Women.

O people, worship the one who created you from a single person and then created a mate of like nature and scattered from that source an abundance of men and women [paraphrasing the Koran].

Our gathering here is definitely for the purpose of discussing and exchanging views concerning the issues and rights of women. While this important issue has been studied and discussed in many international conferences, especially in the United Nations, in general the conclusions have not been that satisfying, and these defects are entirely apparent in the world today, especially with regard to the question of discrimination against women.

We know the primary reasons for the lack of success on the part of the international bodies and the failure to deal with the matter of justice in this important and basic matter.

We believe that any measure to achieve the rights of women must be accompanied by constructive proposals for a rapid movement towards the achievement of the shared aspirations of humanity.

We firmly believe that it is not possible to achieve the rights of women without the recognition and promotion of human values and incorporating them into political, economic, and social affairs. This important matter must definitely be a primary objective for the international bodies. In this regard, the independent governments of the world must, in view of the published introduction of United Nations exhorting nations to "confirm their belief in human rights, the dignity and value of the human personality, and the equality of men, women, and large and small nations," cooperate with one another to make the greatest effort to implement fully the rights of women.

With a passing glance at the record of women's rights in the Western world, it can be seen that, in the words of the great philosopher Mr Will Durant, the inspiration for the idea of women's rights in the West was machines and the industrial revolution, not woman herself and the matter of equal rights of men and women. This idea was expressed as a slogan for the first time at the beginning of the 20th century, and without any kind of roots or intellectual basis. Consequently, oppressed women, due to the oppression that has prevailed over them, have not been able to become aware of their primary human essence and to manifest their potential power. They remain prisoners of the evil greed of hoarders and capitalists; they are wound up like dolls in the hands of those who hold power and the superpowers of the world, and they have no discretion or intellectual independence.

The reason that women in the West have in practice become a form of merchandise and an implement of labor in part of the East is their lack of self-awareness. Yes, woman's alienation from self and from her exalted role of creation has led to her deviation, intellectual imprisonment, and daily-increasing problems. She is sliding down the slope of misfortune and decline and is desperately seeking salvation.

Madame President, respected deputies,
As a representative of Islamic Iran, I declare in the strongest terms that 14 centuries ago in verses of the Koran, Islam put forward human values and intellectual, economic, legal, social, and family independence for women. It also has a book called "Women." In the first book it contains the highest declaration of human rights and the equality of humanity, and we also bring this message to the women of the world, that you are beloved

by God, you have a critical responsibility and high rights, and you must not allow them to imprison you and subject you to imperialist oppression.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is proud that at the beginning of the revolution it was able to honor the true concept of women's rights and freedom through the understanding and employment of the liberating teachings of Islam, and in this regard the women of Iran, by gaining an awareness of the defects and abuses that have been made of their religious culture, have begun fundamental self-reform and have created a revolutionary movement, and they participated actively alongside the men in demonstrations by millions to overthrow the despotic regime, so that the solidarity of men and women in this struggle was striking.

The various scenarios with women carrying children alongside the men heading to the field of battle and into the mouths of machine guns illustrate the prominent and fateful role played by this great class of society in the Islamic revolution and in the elimination of discrimination in order to regain their lost human values and just rights under the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Therefore, this important matter was set as a goal in the introduction to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is one of the achievements of the revolution, and was compiled under the title Woman in the Constitution.

Part One: In the creation of Islamic social institutions, all elements of humanity that hitherto served the multifaceted foreign exploitation of our country are to regain their true identity and human rights. As a part of this process, it is only natural that women should enjoy a particularly large augmentation of their rights, because of the greater oppression they suffered under the idolatrous regime.

The family is the fundamental unit of society and the major center for human growth and advancement. Compatibility of beliefs and ideals is the main consideration in the establishment of a family, for the family is the primary basis of human evolution and growth. It is the duty of Islamic government to provide the facilities necessary for the attainment of this goal.

This view of the family unit delivers woman from being regarded as an object or as an instrument in the service of consumerism and exploitation. Not only does woman thereby recover her critical and precious function of motherhood, rearing orthodox and active human beings, she also becomes a fellow struggler with man in all the different areas of life's activities. Because she accepts more critical responsibilities in the eyes of Islam, she will also be accorded greater value and esteem.

In the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while women have been given the great responsibility of building human beings and society, the rights of women are respected without reservation in the same way that men's rights are respected. They have ownership and discretion over whatever profits and earnings they have acquired. As it says in the noble verse of the Koran, "The men may have what they have earned and the women may have what they have earned," the principle of equality is clearly current.

In our Islamic society, the family is especially important as the unit that forms society and as the bastion of resistance, and the woman is especially important as the leader of this bastion in society. The reduction of the divorce rate and the increase in marriages over figures before the revolution are confirmation of this truth.

There is no doubt that giving women the sacred duty of motherhood and child-rearing does not mean that the role of women in our society is limited only to the family. Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran, like men, have full political and social rights, all women have the right to participate in elections, and the fact that they are women is no limitation for them, and the people are free to elect their representatives from among competent women without any conditions or limitations.

Today in Islamic Iran women are active and striving alongside the men in all political, economic, social, and cultural affairs, and their role in the various areas of education, health care, health treatment, services, administration, factories, and agriculture is very much felt. Moreover, the women play a worthy role in production and industrial work, so that currently a great many of Iran's factories are run with women personnel serving as everything from laborers to engineers.

According to the latest statistics for 1365 [21 March 1986—20 March 1987], there are 987,488 women employed in the country.

According to the latest statistics, the number of women covered by the National Employment Law is 254,259.

According to the latest statistics, women are 82.38 percent of the workers in administrative, educational, and cultural positions and 2.95 percent of the workers in health care and treatment positions.

The doors of the schools and academic centers are open to men and women equally, and the Muslim woman must gain knowledge and education with the expansion of the realm of her struggle and because of her religious commitments. At the lower levels of education and literacy training, which is one of the focal points of the revolution in our country, she has been since the beginning of the revolution and continues to be strikingly active in teaching literacy to illiterate girls and women in the cities and villages. According to the latest statistics 1,455,930 women have become literate. In addition, the activities of women in the revolutionary groups such as the revolutionary guards, the reconstruction crusade, and the mobilization of the oppressed have been most important and constructive.

What gives special character to the image of the Islamic revolutionary woman of Iran, however, is the special kind of social activity she carried out in relation to Iraq's imposed war against Iran. Along with the men, while taking part in military, health care, and cultural training programs to defend their Islamic homeland, they rendered significant services delivering aid to the fronts and behind the lines in the procurement of clothing, medical supplies, and food for combatants, war wounded, and war victims.

A more important responsibility for the heroic women of Iran is to encourage and persuade the men to pursue the aggressor, to achieve the clear rights of the Islamic nation of Iran, and to continue this movement to the final victory. Our free women asked and chose to be this way.

In the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, men and women need and complete each other, and rights and responsibilities have been justly designated for women based on a natural and balanced social and spiritual system.

The social rights of women, without the responsibility of working, are greater than those of men. These include alimony, the bride price, inheritances, the right to half of the husband's wealth in accordance with the terms of the marriage, the wages for nursing children, remuneration for managing the household, and the law allowing half-time employment on a government staff with employment benefits and the availability of maternity leave with fixed administrative wages, are all illustrations of the fact that the rights of women are greater than their responsibilities in society, because the woman is responsible for nurturing the human being and is the agent of his ascent and advancement. For this reason the responsibilities of leadership and judgement have been divided between women and men in such a way that the woman raises the judges and builds the leaders in society, and the man has the responsibility for the judicial and leadership work in the Islamic society.

What has been given above is a glimpse of the true image of the Muslim woman and it shows the true role and value of women in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and you will see it in its full and documented report as an answer to all the accusations that until now have been directed maliciously against our Islamic nation with regard to the rights and conditions of women. Now, however, I think it necessary to mention three special questions.

First Question: Why are the rights for women in Iran half that of men in many cases?

Answer: First, bearing witness is not an individual right for either men or women, it is a responsibility. Second, according to the importance of the subject, in some cases two women testify in the place of one man, and in some cases the testimony of one woman is acceptable while the testimony of one man or several men in special cases is not acceptable. Therefore, the question is one of rights and the interests of society, and there is no question of gender.

Second Question: The law allowing for polygamy in Iran and its prevalence has degraded society and has damaged the personality and rights of women.

According to Article 16 with the addition of nine paragraphs and Article 17 of the Civil Affairs Law pertaining to the requirements for additional marriages, the law of monogamy now prevails in Iran and legalized polygamy is not official in the Islamic nation of Iran. In view of the latest statistics taken in 1365 [21 March 1986-20 March 1987] showing that there are 0.6 percent fewer women than men, there is no need for polygamy.

Concerning the legal principle of polygamy in Islam, if the interests of society require it there may be laws such as the law to increase the rights of women in society, because an individual and social right of a human being is the right to have a spouse, and with regard to women there is the right of motherhood. Without this law, there are women who would remain deprived of their clear right. Therefore, if necessary legal polygamy is in the interest of women and it creates a responsibility for men.

Question Three: The compulsory veil is an illustration of the limitations on women and their lack of freedom in society, and women must be freed from the requirement to wear a veil.

Answer: Unveiled women, and consequently women without responsibility, was a cultural norm in the last century before the revolution in Iran. This had been imposed on Iran, and Muslim women demonstrated by the millions for the Islamic veil, and they want it.

Therefore, the veil is the desire of the aroused people of Iran, not a government requirement, and this is precisely freedom and democracy. The chador is a part of the social custom and culture in our nation, and has never been compulsory or a religious or legal requirement.

In conclusion, we firmly believe that achievement of the rights of the oppressed women of the world and the elimination of discrimination against them can only be achieved through the utilization of the life-giving laws of Islam, and I am prepared, as the representative of Iran, to discuss and prove this truth in any international or regional body.

And greetings to those who follow guidance. Thank you.

Maldives

Pakistan's Yaqub Khan Meets With President

BK1612134889 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1300 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] The foreign minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, now visiting Maldives as a special envoy of the prime minister, has had a meeting with President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom at Male. The foreign minister briefed him about his discussions on the scheduling of the next

SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summit with the president of Sri Lanka, whom he had met earlier in Colombo. President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom greatly appreciated the efforts being made by the prime minister, Ms Benazir Bhutto, in this regard. Sahabzada Yaqub Khan will have further consultations with the Sri Lankan foreign minister on his return journey.

Concludes Visit, Departs

BK1812015289 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] The foreign minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, has had a meeting with the foreign minister of Maldives, Mr Fathulla Jameel, in Male. They discussed matters relating to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and bilateral relations. Before his departure from Male, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan told newsmen that cooperation between Pakistan and Maldives in the fields of culture, education and trade had expanded.

Nepal

King Birendra Cited on Bilateral Ties With India

BK1712082489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 17 Dec 89

[Text] King Birendra has said that Nepal will adopt a policy of constructive cooperation to develop friendship with India. He said his government welcomes the positive attitude of the Indian Government toward his country. Addressing a function in Kathmandu organized to celebrate the King Mahendra memorial and Constitution Day, he said that Nepal pursues a policy of friendship with all countries in accordance with the principles of the United Nations, nonalignment, SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation], and the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

AIR [All India Radio] Kathmandu correspondent Harish Segon says that statements by the prime minister, Mr V.P. Singh, and King Birendra have given rise to the expectations that a dialogue will begin soon to end the 9-month old stalemate in the India-Nepal relations.

Upadhyaya Invites Indian Counterpart To Visit

BK1112035989 Hong Kong AFP in English 1929 GMT 10 Dec 89

[Text] Kathmandu, Dec 10 (AFP)—Nepal's foreign minister, Shailendra Kumar Upadhyaya, has invited his Indian counterpart, Inder Kumar Gujral, to visit Kathmandu and discuss current problems affecting bilateral ties, the Foreign Ministry said Sunday.

Mr. Upadhyaya told Mr. Gujral he would also be willing to visit New Delhi if that is more convenient and begin fresh negotiations on trade and transit, which has dogged relations between the two sides for the past eight months.

Following the expiry of the 1978 trade and transit treaties betwee Nepal and India on March 23, India's Congress (I) government suspended bilateral trade and closed 19 of the 21 trade passages across the 1,040 km (650 mile) border with India's states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

India also cut supplies of petroleum products, which officials said had seriously affected the Nepalese economy.

Nepal has approached former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's government several times in the past eight months to renegotiate trade and transit treaties and clear up misunderstandings between the two sides. But India has not responded to the Nepalese proposal.

Government Lifts Restrictions on Gas Distribution

BK1612092489 Hong Kong AFP in English 0913 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] Kathmandu, Dec 16 (AFP)—The Nepalese Government has lifted restrictions on petrol distribution, official sources in Kathmandu have announced. A spokesman for the Ministry of Supply said Friday [15 December] that in view of the gradual improvement of supply of petroleum products, the ministry has decided to lift its restriction on selling petrol by coupons.

Nepal has imposed the restriction on the free sale or distribution of petroleum products since the termination of treaties on trade and transit by India on March 23, 1989. The official sources, however, said they would continue the limit imposed on consumption of petroleum products to government offices, corporations and public offices as an austerity measure.

Restriction of free sale of petroleum products has adversely affected the tourism industry in Nepal, and one travel agency source said the withdrawal of the restriction may help boost the number of foreigners visiting the country.

Last week, the Nepalese Government announced the withdrawal of restrictions on the free sale and distribution of diesel and kerosene.

Nepali Congress, Communist Party Leaders Arrested

BK1512161689 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 15 Dec 89

[Text] In Nepal, the leader of the banned Nepali Congress, Mr Ganesh Man Singh, the party general secretary, Mr Girija Prasad Koirala, and the Communist leader, Mr Manmohan Adhikari, were taken into police custody at Biratnagar today. These leaders had demanded immediate abolition of the present political system in Nepal and formation of a national government.

According to a press release, there was a complete strike in Biratnagar today to protest against the arrests.

Pakistan

Defense Cooperation Accord Signed With PRC

BK1912160089 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] Pakistan and China will promote mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of defense science, technology, and industry in the spirit of mutual understanding. A memorandum of understanding to this effect was signed between the two countries in Rawalpindi today. Retired Colonel Ghulam Sarwar Cheema, minister of state for defense; and Lieutenant General Ding Henggao, Chinese minister of the Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense, signed the documents on behalf of their respective governments.

The documents, which will remain effective for 10 years, provide for bilateral cooperation in the fields of purchase, joint research and development, joint production, transfer of technology, as well as export to third countries through mutual agreement.

Zeng Peiyon, the Chinese deputy minister for machine building and electronics, along with his delegation, called on Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in Islamabad today. The prime minister referred to the agreement reached with Chinese Premier Li Peng in connection with supplying a 300-megawatt nuclear plant to Pakistan. She underscored the need for the two countries to work jointly in fields of science and technology to speed up the pace of economic development in their respective countries. Benazir Bhutto expressed her happiness at the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Pakistan and China for cooperation in defense science, technology, and industry. She thanked China for assisting Pakistan's economic development program and stressed the need for increasing bilateral cooperation in various fields.

The Chinese deputy minister said his government desires to increase scientific and technical cooperation with Pakistan.

President Receives Delegation

BK2012112489 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] President Ghulam Ishaq Khan has lauded China's contribution to Pakistan's economic development and hoped that cooperation between the two countries would be further expanded to their mutual benefit. He was talking to the visiting 5-member Chinese delegation led by the minister of commission of science, technology, and industry for national defense, Lieutenant General Ding Henggao, which called on him in Islamabad today. The president hoped that the two countries would find new ways to share technology and promote joint ventures to reduce the cost of industrial production. The Chinese minister assured the president of his country's continued interest in Pakistan's progress and development. He said the memorandum of understanding signed yesterday was the latest proof of this abiding interest.

Afghan Diplomat Defects to Resistance

BK1612145189 Hong Kong AFP in English 1420 GMT 16 Dec 89

[Text] Islamabad, Dec 16 (AFP)—A deputy commercial attache in the Afghan Embassy here said Saturday he had fled the mission to join the resistance after engaging in intelligence as an undercover agent for the Afghan Secret Service.

Aminullah, 49, told a news conference he joined the Foreign Office in 1982 and that he had been an undercover agent for the Afghan secret police Khad. Mr. Aminullah was posted in Islamabad in 1987 as assistant commercial attache, the post he held until Thursday.

"But my actual mission was something else," he said, adding that he had been conveying secret reports to the Hezb-e-Eslami resistance group led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, whom he had joined in 1984.

"Since then I had been feeding information to Hezb-e-Eslami," he said, adding that his own relatives were field commanders in the group.

Nawab Saleem, a spokesman of the Hezb-e-Eslami, said the diplomat had conveyed "some very useful information" to his party.

Mr. Aminullah said he decided to defect when the embassy was "becoming suspicious of my activities" and asked the entire diplomatic staff to surrender their passports.

Showing his diplomatic passport and KHAD card to reporters, Mr. Aminullah said his wife and three children "are safe with me" in Islamabad.

"Even if some harm is caused to them, I will accept it as a servant of Islam," he said, adding that his native town was in the eastern province of Paktia.

The diplomat also said that KHAD agents were behind some bombings in the northwestern border town of Peshawar, adding that the saboteurs took training in camps in Jalalabad.

"I saw with my own eyes saboteurs getting training from the Soviet instructors in Jalalabad," Mr. Aminullah said.

The diplomat's first posting was in Quetta bordering Afghanistan where he served in the commercial consulate.

After two years he was recalled to Kabul where he served as assistant director of Khad's foreign nationals surveillance wing, he said. His seven-man team was assigned to watching the activities of U.S., Chinese and Pakistani embassy personnel, he said.

Minister Granted Interim Bail Before Arrest

BK1812082289 Islamabad Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] The chief justice of the Lahore high court, Mr Justice Mohammad Rafique Tarar, in Lahore today granted interim bail before arrest to the federal minister [for labor and manpower], Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Awan, till the 9th of next month with sureties of 200,000 rupees each. He also directed that the petitioners shall join the investigation as and when required by the police.

Media Delegation Departs for PRC, DPRK

BK1212032289 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 12 Dec 89

[Text] A three-member delegation led by Ahmad Saeed Awan, the minister of state for information and broadcasting, departed Karachi last night on a 10-day visit to China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Prior to departure, the minister of state said that he will explore the possibilities of further strengthening Pakistan's existing cooperation with these two countries in the field of mass media.

Sri Lanka

Tamil Council Issues Statement on Recent Fighting

BK1812124889 Hong Kong AFP in English 1222 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] Colombo, Dec 18 (AFP)—A Tamil guerrilla group Monday [18 December] claimed it had killed 115 rivals, including government troops, in three separate gunbattles and lost 37 of their own fighters in Sri Lanka's northeast region.

The Tamil National Council in a statement said that its military wing killed 67 fighters of the dominant Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and local troops in eastern Batticaloa District early last week.

The council said its Tamil National Army (TNA) guerrillas had withdrawn to defensive positions after what it called heavy air attacks by the Sri Lankan Air Force during the fighting from December 10.

The statement issued from the northeastern port of Trincomalee and released here accused the government of supporting the LTTE to attack TNA cadres.

Bitter fighting broke out between the pro-Indian TNA and the LTTE which is currently holding peace talks with the Colombo government. The LTTE has officially ended a 17-year-old guerrilla campaign against the state.

"The Sri Lankan Government decided to ferry LTTE betrayers dressed in Sri Lankan Army uniforms from Jaffna, Vavuniya and Kilinochchi (all in the north) to Batticaloa," the statement said.

Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne who is also junior defence minister has said both the TNA and the LTTE armed cadres were illegal and called on them to put down their weapons.

The council claimed that local troops dressed in civilian clothes and not LTTE fighters were controlling Batticaloa Town. However, reporters who visited the area saw heavily armed teenage Tiger militants manning positions and freely roaming the streets in Batticaloa Friday.

LTTE members had earlier claimed they had killed nearly 100 TNA men and lost two of their own men.

Batticaloa was vacated by Indian troops deployed in the island's northeast on November 29.

"The TNA has withdrawn to defensive positions and are controlling the roads leading to the (Batticaloa) town from the outskirts," the council said. It also said that 31 LTTE men were ambushed and killed south of the port of Trincomalee Friday. One TNA man died and six were wounded in the attack, the statement said.

It said 17 more LTTE men were surrounded and killed by TNA members in Vallai in Jaffna Peninsula on the same day and the victims' bodies were burnt in public.

There had earlier been sporadic clashes between rival Tamil groups, mostly in areas vacated by the Indian troops.

The Indian Peace Keeping Force, deployed in the northeast in line with a 1987 bilateral pact, have been withdrawing from eastern areas and northwestern regions ahead of a total withdrawal slated for the end of the year.

LTTE Becomes Official Political Party

BK2012085289 Hong Kong AFP in English 0836 GMT 20 Dec 89

[Text] Colombo, Dec 20 (AFP)—Sri Lanka's dominant Tamil rebels Wednesday announced they had won official recognition as a political party at the end of a 17-year-old guerrilla campaign costing over 30,000 lives.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said it has been registered as a political party under the name People's Front of Liberation Tigers (PFLT) and would enter mainstream politics with immediate effect.

LTTE's political idealogue Anton Balasingam told reporters here that they would, however, continue to maintain their armed cadres until security arrangements were made to protect minority Tamils and Moslems.

"Until and unless a permanent security arrangement is worked out to guarantee the safety and security of our people we will have the Liberation Tiger Movement," Mr. Balasingam said.

Asked whether the group had dropped its demand for a seperate state called Eelam in the island's northeast where the minority Tamils and Moslems are concentrated, he said: "The question does not come up now.

"We cannot be in an entrenched position while we are having negotiations. (But) it is not prudent on our part to give up Eelam. The demand is there."

In an earlier interview, Mr. Balasingam had said that they would ask the government to remove the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution which requires politicians and public servants to disavow separatism.

Mr. Balasingam said Wednesday that the group's supremo Velupullai Prabhakaran, holed up somewhere in the northern jungles, would continue to be the overall leader. His deputy Mahendraraja, alias Mahattaya, aged 34, who is also underground, will be the president of the PFLT while Central Committee member Yogaratnam Yogi, 34, now in Colombo, will be its general secretary.

Mr. Balasingam said his group, currently holding peace talks with Colombo, was observing a ceasefire with Sri Lankan security forces and Indian troops in the island's northeast but continued to fight rival Tamil militants.

The LTTE was moving to disarm a so-called Tamil National Army (TNA) which Mr. Balasingam described as a proxy army of India after New Delhi troops withdrew from certain areas of the northeast.

There had been heavy fighting between the TNA and the LTTE in the northeast since early this month.

Mr. Balasingam said Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) and India's External Intelligence Agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), had played a "crucial role" in arming and training the TNA.

However, Mr. Balasingam declined to discuss Indian military and financial assistance to his group since 1983 when all Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups received safe haven in the neighbouring south Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

After opening peace talks with the government in April, the LTTE had come to an "understanding" with the police and security forces and had "advised" them not to take offensive action against Tamil militants.

"The police were told that the LTTE will do the job for them," he said, referring to their attacks on tna positions in eastern Batticaloa District last week after TNA attacks on local police.

Mr. Balasingam said any action by the Sri Lankan security forces would be misunderstood as a move by Colombo to supress the minorities. The TNA was trying to provoke the government, he added.

He said during the past 17 years, the LTTE had lost 1,305 fighters and some 25,000 Tamil civilians had been killed. According to LTTE estimates, about 2,000 Indians had lost their lives since the IPKF moved to disarm the LTTE in October 1987.

Mr. Balasingam said he had no figures for casualties among the majority Sinhalese community or the local security forces killed by the Tigers. The LTTE had been accused of killing hundreds of Sinhalese villagers and troops.

The PFLT statement said the party would strive for self-determination of Tamils and Moslems and to protect and preserve the geographical identity of a traditional homeland for the two communities.

It also pledged to support world national liberation organisations against "imperialism and neo-colonialism."

Political Ideology Outlined

BK2012095489 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0859 GMT 20 Dec 89

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, 20 Dec (LANKAPUVATH)—The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] has been recognised as a political party by the commissioner of elections and will take part in the democratic process under a new name, the People's Front of the Liberation Tigers [PFLT].

This was announced by the LTTE's theoretecian Dr Anton Balasingham at a news conference in Colombo this morning.

Dr Balasingham said the party leader will be K. Mahendrarajah alias Mahattaya and the general secretary will be Yogaratnam Yogi. Velupillai Prabhakaran will continue to be overall leader of both the military and political wings of organization.

He said that the PFLT has embraced democratic socialism as its political and theoretical ideology.

Dr Balasingham said that the party holds the view that democratic ideals of liberty, equality, social justice and self-determination are essential components of an authentic socialist system.

He said the party advocates a socialist political system based on democratic principles, an ideal political society that would enhance the material and spiritual development of human beings.

The aims, objectives, and ideology of the party are:
"To fight for the social, political, and economic emancipation of the Tamil and Muslim masses".
"To fight against all forms of oppression, discrimination, and exploitation of the Tamils and Muslims".
"To protect and preserve the georaphical identity and integrity of the traditional homelands of the Tamils and Muslims".
"To eliminate the oppressive caste system and work towards the establishment of an equalitarian social formation".

"To fight and defend the rights and interests of all workers and peasants".
"To work towards communal peace, harmony and co-existence".
"To fight against the oppression of women and support the struggle for women's liberation".
"To fight for the defence of political freedoms and democratic rights of all the people of the island".
"To support the world national liberation struggles against imperialism and neo-colonialism".

In answer to a question Dr Balasinghem said that the Indian Government was expected to play the role of peacemaker in the region and not politically or militarily interfere in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka.

He further said that the former Indian prime minister's Sri Lanka policy was a disaster and he believed the new administration in New Delhi will formulate a new policy.

He said that over 1,000 TNA [Tamil National Army] cadres had surrendered to the LTTE and they had been sent back to their homes.

New Violence Claims 14 During Last 24 Hours

BK1812033089 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 18 Dec 89

[Text] In Sri Lanka, the Tamil National Council comprising four groups has offered 10 of its seats in the Northeastern Provincial Council to the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], but has opposed the dissolution of the council or dismantling the provincial militia—the Citizens Voluntary Force. In a statement issued in Colombo, the political committee of the council has stated that in view of the enormous sacrifices the groups have made for parliamentary democracy in the northeast, they are not prepared to compromise on the established Northeastern Provincial Council or the northeast militia. The EPRLF, TELO, ENDLF and PLOTE [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front, Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization, Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front and People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam] constitute the council.

Meanwhile, a police constable and a Buddhist monk were among 14 people killed in fresh incidents of violence in the Sinhalese majority areas of Sri Lanka during the last 24 hours.

Communique Lists Arrests, Killings, Subversion

BK1812102589 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0947 GMT 18 Dec 89

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, Dec 18 (LANKAPUVATH)—The Sri Lanka Air Force in a search operation arrested 20 suspected subversives, who were found in a boat at the Beira Lake in Colombo. A government communique issued today further states that a large haul of subversive items were recovered by the security forces during a cordon and search operation at Wattegama in the Central Province. The recovered items were repeater shotguns, 22 electric detonators, 39 plastic tubes used for manufacturing bombs, Army uniforms, magazines, cartridges and several rounds of ammunition.

In Matale and Nuwara Eliya, security forces arrested two suspected subversives and recovered five locally made shotguns. In the north central province district of Anuradhapura, a security forces mobile patrol fired at a group of subversives who were attempting to waylay vehicles at Ihala Galkulama. Three subversives were arrested at Polonnaruwa and an Army deserter was also arrested for subversive activities. At Batticaloa in the Eastern Province, EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] militants robbed a Toyota van valued at Rs. 225,000 belonging to the Irrigation Department.

In Colombo a Sri Lankan Navy mobile patrol arrested a subversive suspect with a 9-mm pistol. A group of unidentified persons robbed a taxi in Colombo, subsequently the taxi was found with the Motorola communications set missing. In the Sabaragamuwa province district of Kegalle, security forces conducting search operations at Talliyadda, Wagolla and Dehiowita arrested seven suspects and recovered repeater shotguns, 12 bore shotguns, cartridges and Army uniforms. A group of unknown armed persons hacked to death three members of a family at Kaltota in the Ratnapura. At Hambantota, in the Southern Province, a group of unidentified persons set fire to a SLTB [Sri Lanka Transport Board] bus at Kudagoda, and at Wellaodaya a group of unidentified persons shot and killed venerable Rekawa Pagnatissa of the Rekawa Temple and two others. At Matara, a group of unknown armed persons robbed cash and jewellery valued at Rs. 216,000 from the residence of K.G. Jayatileka.

A group of subversives set fire to the superintendents bungalow, a lorry and a tractor trailer belonging to the Wilpita Estate rubber factory, the communique states.

EPRLF Supports 'Fresh Elections' in Northeast

BK2012074489 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1600 GMT 19 Dec 89

[Text] In Sri Lanka, the EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] has supported the move for fresh elections to the northeastern provincial council, provided the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] joins the democratic process after giving up arms. The EPRLF MP's [Members of Parliament] Mr Premachandran and Mr Yogasankar told newsmen in Madras that the elections should be held only after a comprehensive settlement is reached. The settlement should include devolution of powers to the provincial government and the safety and security of Tamils.

The EPRLF leaders expressed their satisfaction over the fresh initiatives taken by the Indian prime minister and the Tamil Nadu chief minister to resolve the issue.

Editorial on Lack of Progress in Indian Pullout

BK1812104489 Colombo SUN in English
11 Dec 89 p 5

[Editorial: "Pullout Dilemma"]

[Text] The new Indian Prime Minister has reportedly made no firm commitment on an early withdrawal of the remaining IPKF [Indian Peacekeeping Force] personnel from Sri Lanka. Instead according to reports he has agreed to study the issue at length and draw up a joint schedule with the Lankan leadership.

Needless to say the Lankan Minister led a team of officials to New Delhi with a firm belief that India will respond positively to a new schedule that will expedite the total pull out of troops. Prime Minister Singh evidently gave some hope to the Lankan President during their telephone dialogue last week.

Mr Singh is reputedly a man of honesty and high integrity and such qualities enabled him to be victorious at the recent polls. One cannot therefore doubt his own commitments to the pull out from Lanka based on his own pronouncements that the IPKF deployment here was one of the biggest mistakes committed by India.

Even before his polls victory we too cautioned the officials here not to be too optimistic about any decisive turnaround in Indian policy towards Sri Lanka. Besides the Lankan problem was hardly an election issue in that country. And now the reaction from the new government cannot be a surprise.

The fact that the invisible government of the bureaucrats is more powerful than the 'de jure regime' cannot be overlooked when we seek changes to the status quo.

The same officials in the South Bloc [Indian Foreign Ministry] still hold key positions and make decisions for their political bosses. Therefore it is futile to expect a change of heart and priority with such speed.

Instead the Lankan leadership should continue to forge a better relationship with their counterparts in Delhi in resolving the crisis through greater understanding and with positive reactions that are conducive to peace and normalcy in Sri Lanka.

We should not at the same time overlook the importance of having good relations with India's "shadow government" that could return to power due to the fractious situation of the present regime.

Most of Lanka's problems have had their roots in the xenophobia that was allowed to grow during the past as a result of our own volition. India as a regional power hardly hesitated to play an adversary role and directly interfere in Lankan affairs.

Perhaps, we should try to remedy this crisis and settle the outstanding problems through mutual consultation and dialogue without any further recourse to vituperation and acrimony.

India led by a new Premier and a new team of decision makers should on its own try to revamp its old image of a nosey parker and a hostile Big Brother by reassuring Lanka of its own bona fides towards peace, nonalignment and good neighbourly relations with smaller nations.

At the same time Lanka must ensure that the ground situation in the northeast provides no reasons for India the self-styled peace keeper to justify a prolonged stay. Regrettably the power-struggle by rival Tamil groups continues to jeopardise progress in this regard.

A new political effort is therefore vital in resolving the initial impediment.

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